

THE
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REGINALD JOHN SMITH.

WHEN I went as a boy of twelve to Eton in 1874, and entered College, having won a scholarship, I found myself a member of a very independent and self-contained community. We were seventy in number; we wore gowns in school and surplices in chapel. We dined in the great College Hall, a panelled Gothic place of much stateliness, with an open timbered roof and many portraits of distinguished men looking down on us. College was a school within a school. It had its own games, its own customs and traditions, and it was ruled by the Sixth Form, an oligarchy ten in number, who could fag, and punish, and even set lines; the Master in College, an elderly, amiable and artistic man, presided benevolently, but he did not rule, and was not even consulted about minor discipline. He was a Constitutional Monarch, the Sixth Form being the Cabinet, and the Captain of the School the Premier.

The Sixth Form at that date happened to be mostly a very young lot. We Lower Boys lived in cubicles in the old Long Chamber, a vast room with deep-set windows, an open fireplace, and a huge venerable oak table worn and furrowed with hard usage. The room opened into the Sixth Form passage, with a row on each side of small but very lofty rooms, each with its own fire. We were summoned one evening to the Sixth Form supper-room, where the great men sat at their ease with cold meat, bread, beer and cheese before them. They seemed to me old men, as old as my father almost. We were chosen in turn as fags, and I fell to the lot of a genial boy, J. B. Chevallier, whose bath I filled, made his toast and tea, and did any odd jobs required.

But when we came back in January, there was a shift of fags, and I was transferred to the charge of Reginald Smith. I did not desire to change, though I felt vaguely flattered at being chosen by a boy who was higher up in the school. But from that moment

he became a friend. He was endlessly good-natured. He told me I might work in his room, and I trespassed much upon his *bonhomie*. He would clear a space at his table, ask me what I was doing, help me over a difficult passage. Sometimes two or three Sixth-Form boys would come in, when I would listen open-eared to the easy gossip of the gods. Long Chamber was a noisy place, and it was delicious to escape into a quiet room with a good fire and an indulgent mentor. So much an established system was it, that I remember Reginald Smith doing me a Latin pentameter, into which I inadvertently introduced a false quantity. When my tutor underlined it, I said with injured innocence 'But, Sir, my fagmaster did that!' 'Oh, indeed,' said my tutor with a smile; 'then give my compliments to your fagmaster and tell him that the *e* of Senator is short and not long!' I did not deliver the message till twenty years later.

One little incident I recollect most vividly. We used to cook our fagmasters' teas at a sort of common oven, with iron plates, on which the boys' kettles were boiled. It was rumoured that the attendant did not clean them properly, so a boy, to test this, poured coffee one evening into all the kettles in order to note the result. That evening I poached two eggs for Reginald Smith. It was a dark room, the kitchen, and I was horrified to observe that the eggs when poached were of a rich brown colour. I carried the plate palpitating to my fagmaster's room. He took it from my hand and sat long regarding them. Then he looked up and said 'They look very odd! I don't think I shall attempt these. You wouldn't like to eat them yourself?' He held out the plate, and I took it away gratefully and devoured them, coffee-dyed integument and all. He never said a word of blame about it, except to ask me smilingly afterwards if they had agreed with me. But it entirely won my heart, and I am sure that no fag ever tried harder to serve a fagmaster well than I did after that evening.

He was then a tall, slim, smooth-faced fellow, with curly hair and I think small whiskers, which the older boys almost invariably grew. He was strong and active, but he had not the dexterity for games that brought athletic success. He was much liked for his modest and quiet friendliness and his entire simplicity and goodness of heart.

After I ceased to be his fag, he would always stop and say a pleasant word to me. He often reminded me in later years how my father came down to examine for the Newcastle Scholarship,

asked to see him, and thanked him for his kindness to me. But I was on the occasion surprised to see my stately fagmaster a little shy and embarrassed in my father's presence, when I had fully expected that it would be the other way.

He was a promising scholar, and won an Eton Scholarship at King's in 1875, passing on to Cambridge in 1876. When he left, he gave me his photograph and quite a number of pictures and small ornaments for my room. When he came down to Eton he used to pay me a call. But by the time that I went to Cambridge in 1881, he had gone to London to read for the Bar, and thus at Cambridge I only saw him on his occasional visits ; but the old friendly tie was always there.

His time at Cambridge was a very happy period for him ; at Eton, in spite of many friendships, his lack of athletic success had kept him somewhat in the background. But at Cambridge, his transparent simplicity and boundless goodwill, as well as his sound judgment and ability, were at once recognised. Before long, with all the generous admiration of a young man for a kindly and gifted senior, he had made close friends with Henry Bradshaw, the great librarian. But perhaps his greatest friend was the brilliant J. K. Stephen, who gave him the name, Jack Smith, by which he was then generally known.

J. K. Stephen was a young man of quite extraordinary brilliance and power. One sees the old days in a golden light, no doubt, but yet I do not think I have ever heard talk of such range and quality as his ; he could be serious, dry, severely intellectual ; but he also had a sharp and keen-edged wit, together with a broad, fanciful, and quite irresponsible humour. He enjoyed almost more than strenuous discussion the society of appreciative, friendly, perceptive men, in whose company his talk could ebb and flow with his restless mood. Reginald Smith was always the most generous of listeners ; he was never stirred to jealous competitiveness by good talk ; but he held his own, he kept the game going, he applauded delightedly ; and this always made him a particularly welcome companion to men whose humour flourished better in a sympathetic atmosphere than in a combative one. I have often heard J. K. Stephen speak about him and always with a deep regard. He valued not only his geniality and unaffectedness, but his peculiar faithfulness to a tie of friendship ; for this was indeed a special characteristic of Reginald Smith, that his friends felt so sure of him, and recognised that he was not only a good comrade, but a

trusty champion of his friends' merits and qualities in all places and companies.

For a long time after that I held no particular communication with Reginald Smith. My only sight of him was on occasional visits he paid to Cambridge, and then later on when I was an Eton Master, and he made a brief appearance. But some time in the late 'nineties, I think, when he had left the Bar to become a publisher, he attended a Founders' Day dinner at Eton, and at a reception afterwards I came upon him in a corner of the College Library. He greeted me with the greatest warmth ; and there it was, just the same as ever, the old semi-paternal indulgent interest and sympathy. We talked of many things, and it was then that he suggested that I should send him a book for publication. But other plans intervened. I resigned my mastership at Eton in 1903, but stayed on there to work at the Windsor papers for a while ; and it must have been early in 1904 that I met him again at Eton, and he suggested laughingly that I might have some impressions of a schoolmaster's life, of an informal kind, which might take shape in a book. The result was the 'Upton Letters.' This book he scrutinised with the utmost care, and it was then that I really discovered the wonderful soundness of his judgment. He had a peculiar power of foreseeing contingencies in books, and a most tender regard for the feelings of others. I remember his saying 'This will give a false impression—it is out of tune with the book !' or he would say 'That portrait will be identified ; rightly or wrongly it will hurt so-and-so ; I would omit it or make it unrecognisable.' I did omit a certain amount of the book in deference to his suggestions, and not only do I think he was right, but I am sure that he saved me from painful criticism. His delight in the success of the book was overflowing. That was another gift of his, that the praise of an author's work in which he was interested was not a mild satisfaction to him, but a visible and audible delight. The book was anonymous, but it 'went.' I had many curious communications about it, in which he used to revel. 'That letter must be a real pleasure to you !' he would say, 'at least I know it is a real pleasure to me.' From that time until the end I was in constant communication with him. How he found time to write so constantly and with such anxious care about the minutest details, I cannot say. He next admitted me to the CORNHILL, and the series of papers took shape as the College Window. It was like him, when the book succeeded, to commission from Mr. Philip Norman a

beautiful water-colour of the actual window which he sent me with eager delight.

As a publisher, he took endless personal pains. He read, I imagine, most of the books submitted to him; he made many suggestions. In particular cases, he liked to fortify his own opinion by the opinion of a sympathetic judge, and I have examined a good many MSS. for him. What he aimed at securing was a solid sort of literature, with quality and distinction of style and wholesome tenderness of feeling—‘People like to have something to get their teeth into,’ I have often heard him say. He did not like triviality or smartness, but catered for what is perhaps the most stable section of the reading public, not the sharply intellectual, not, as I have heard him say, quoting Lord Stowell, for the people who wanted ‘mere novelties,’ but for those who desired a sober cultured atmosphere, with some tradition and continuity of aim, based upon a liberal simplicity and homely chivalrous emotions. His unaffectedness saved him from conventionality and his common sense secured him against mere sentiment.

As an editor, he had a quite unique perception of the sort of thing which interested minds that were alert and perceptive without being exactly adventurous; and to this he added a really remarkable instinct for variety and range. When he was at the Bar, he read largely and widely, and wrote many reviews. Later it might have been supposed that with his settled tastes—and I doubt if, after he became a publisher, he had ever had time or even inclination for desultory reading—he might have fallen into a groove; but it was not so. Contrast and change were the notes of the *CORNHILL*. He had at one time a small advisory committee, but I suspect that his own judgment was far superior to their collective judgment. Neither was he easily over-ruled or over-persuaded. I was once in London for a short time, and he allowed me to assist him on the *CORNHILL* by making a first selection among the innumerable MSS. which poured in. He never seemed to lay undue stress on the reputation of an author, or to publish for the sake of a name. Everything was considered on its merits, and with a view to an ingenious balancing of interests, of which he was hardly conscious. He did not give reasons for a choice; he just seemed to feel what was required.

All these years I was constantly in his company; we used to lunch at our club, talk about all sorts of matters—apart from

literary schemes, he was always immensely interested in personal reminiscences, though not, I think, in mere gossip. Then we would adjourn to the office, a big first-floor room like a comfortable study looking out into Waterloo Place. There were many books about, and interesting sketches and pictures relating to some of the great personages, like Thackeray and the Brontës, in whom the house had a hereditary interest. He had generally some curious letter or memento to show me—I remember his delight at finding a letter of Thackeray's, who in his early days had made a hurried visit to France without either money or wraps, and had been lent both by a young clergyman on the boat. Thackeray's letter desired that the cloak should be returned and the money repaid; and the young clergyman was my own grandfather, William Sidgwick.

The big table was always covered with papers; but he had the gift of seeming entirely at leisure. He never hurried over a talk, he never seemed oppressed by work. Facts and figures were always instantly forthcoming. There he worked long and late, and there I have been introduced to many memorable people; one of the great joys of his life was the establishing these easy and frank relations with authors and authoresses; and to this unembarrassed, unhurried talk he always sacrificed his own convenience, but never grudged it. It is pathetic to me that the last time I ever saw him was quite recently when I was passing through Waterloo Place in a taxi. I had missed an interview with him, owing to his having been unexpectedly detained. I leaned out, and just as I passed, the room was suddenly illuminated, and I saw him sitting in the well-known chair, bending over the heaped-up table, at his post.

I have dined with him at his hospitable house, where he was the most genial and self-effacing of hosts. He never wished to claim attention, but contrived to make his guests talk their best without any attempt to draw them out. He spoke very rarely of himself, while the genuineness of his interest in a companion removed all need of tact or diplomacy. I have been at his simple and comfortable little bungalow shooting-box. He was a very keen and untiring sportsman and an excellent shot. Never was anything more easy than the life. You shot or walked or sat and talked. He would take you to hospitable houses round about and had a pleasant word for all passers-by. Even there he had masses of letters; but he was a rapid and decisive worker, and his business never overflowed into his leisure. Again I recollect being ill in London, undergoing medical treatment. He used to send his

carriage for me to have a drive, drop interesting books for me to read, send me fruit and flowers, tempt me to do a bit of light work which he thought might distract me ; and knowing that I was depressed and melancholy, he said that he would not bother me, but that if I wanted him he would come, or that I could invite myself to his house at any time, for any meal ; and that he would invite any guest to see me. One incident is strongly in my mind, how in those dreary days I was wandering alone and distracted along a street, when he drove past. He descended in haste, and I could see that he was both shocked and concerned at my state. Would I care to drive with them, he asked, or would I like a companion for a walk ? No ? Yet he put some heart into me, I hardly know how ; and his tender solicitude was like a precious balm.

I think that his two strongest qualities were his generosity of feeling and his loyalty. These were the pillars of his spirit. I remember once saying laughingly to him that if I were in sudden trouble, he was one of the two people I knew to whom I could write, say, for a thousand pounds, and add that I could not tell him why I wanted it, or how I should use it, or whether it would be repaid ; and that I felt I should have had a cheque by return of post. I do not think I ever saw him more pleased. He gave me one of his kindest smiles, and said ' I like your saying that—you can't know how much I like your saying so.' But this liberality was all entirely unostentatious. Again and again I have come on the track of something generous which he had done ; and yet if he mentioned the incident, his own part in it was always untold. He would take endless trouble, even with people who had little claim on him, to unravel troublesome business, to put things straight, to get someone out of a difficulty, all as a matter of course ; nor did he accompany it with unpalatable reminders or prudent advice. Wise counsel he could give, but he never gave it unasked ; nor did he ever say ' I told you so.' He trusted the logic of events to speak for themselves. His own business was just to help if he could, and to ask no recognition or gratitude.

His loyalty, again. For his school, his university, his old friends and teachers, his old-established business, his Church, his nation, and most of all for his home, he cherished a silent passion of duty and devotion. It was not a sentiment or a tender regard ; it was a faithfulness which called for service and sacrifice, if there was need. I used to poke a mild fun at times at him for his regard for quite inefficient and absurd people who were part of his past.

' Oh yes, I know what you mean,' he would say, ' but he is really a very well-meaning fellow—he is his own worst enemy.' While if one said something cordial and laudatory of an old friend, he would say ' That's right ! I like to hear that ! ' Again, I have seldom seen him manifest such pleasure as when I have told him pleasant and creditable things of men whom he had had cause to mistrust. ' I'm glad you told me that ; I shall think very differently of him.' But his judgment was clear and sometimes severe. He had no feeble sentimentality or universal tolerance. He hated meanness and spite and baseness with all his heart ; and yet he always preferred some counterbalancing instance of honour or good feeling. If a dog had a bad name, he never wanted to hang him ; he wanted a sound reason for believing him to be a good dog after all.

His tall slender form with the big head, long clear-cut features, pale complexion and crisp grizzled hair, were always impressive. He preserved an indefinable look of youth both in face and movement to the end of his life. He had at first sight a certain gravity of air and a self-possessed, formal, decidedly stately manner, which I imagine made him seem formidable to a stranger. You would have said that he was a man who kept his own counsel, and was not afraid of making decisions. But this was instantly modified upon acquaintance by his pleasant smile and laugh, and a sort of eager, considerate courtesy extended to all alike. But I realise his personal impressiveness from the way in which, as I write, the look of his face with the frank, somewhat tired, eyes, and the tones and inflections of his resonant voice come back to me. What I was always conscious of was his entire absence of preoccupation or restlessness of mind ; his look and his thought were bent upon you with an undivided attention ; his talk was directed to you, and he gave his whole mind to the matter in hand. He had a peculiar tenacity of aim which held on its way without assertion or protestation. I remember that I once wrote a book and pressed it on his attention ; he weighed it carefully, and in returning it, asked me to consider a variety of points ; he did not refuse to publish the book, and he did full justice to it, but I became somehow aware that his opinion was not favourable. I put it aside, and long after, smilingly accused him of having held me back from publication. He gave me a friendly look and said ' Well, I don't think it would have added to your reputation.' But it was all so gently done that I never had a sense of having been thwarted, only of having been guided. Indeed I think that there can hardly have been a

publisher who decided so firmly and never overstepped his own judgment, and who yet had so few disagreements with authors, and retained so firmly their affectionate respect and regard.

He had always a great sympathy with youth and ingenuousness and freshness of spirit. He used to quote Thackeray on the pleasure of visiting boys at school, going round the old scenes with them, with a dinner and a tip to follow. One of his few recreative delights was the music at the Temple Church, where his own memorial service was held. He was no musician; but the beauty of the worship, the stately surroundings, the touch of old association with chapel services at Eton and King's, made an almost passionate appeal to his reverence and delight. And this had a larger side to it in the expectation of interest and sympathy with which he approached all men alike, and in his wonderful power of inspiring all who worked with him to do their best. It was all not a calculated attitude, it was just the quality of his own mind and temper taking shape. For indeed he seems to me to have been a perfect example of the good citizen, active in business, unflinching in purpose, disinterested in kindness, with strong and simple principles of character and life, decorous and considerate, a lover of the old order; and at the same time courteous and high-minded, and entirely peaceable in word and deed. Strife and spite and ill-feeling were abhorrent to him. He kept his sense of duty for himself; he was not censorious or interfering; he would not easily suspect another man of any failure in duty, and it was no pleasure to him to indicate how another ought to behave.

He felt the outbreak of war very deeply. He was intensely patriotic, and at a time when his staff was depleted, when he had many private anxieties and cares, he kept up his activities as a volunteer, as well as all his other interests. He could not spare his energies or his sacrifices at a time when the world was full of anxiety, labour and loss. He had no taste for complaining, and self-pity was quite unknown to him. Sensitive as he was, he found deep and strong comfort in his home, and in that sacred companionship, it was evident to all who knew him, lay the real joy and inspiration of his life. So he continued, enduring, toiling, spending himself lavishly and bountifully in loyal and faithful service, up to the very end; and his friends mourn in him a high-minded and chivalrous gentleman, faithful in duty, tender in affection, keeping an innocent spirit and a childlike heart unstained and undimmed.

A. C. BENSON.

UNCONQUERED: AN EPISODE OF 1914.

BY MAUD DIVER.

CHAPTER IV.

'I keep the youth of souls who pitch
 Their joy in the old heart of things ;
 Who feel the coming, young as aye ;
 Alive for life ; "awake" to die.'

MEREDITH.

THAT radiant day of summer, all too short for Mark, taxed to the utmost his mother's impatient spirit that could bear any ill better than the ache of suspense, sharpened by premonition of the worst. Mark's off-hand manner of announcing the day's programme to the breakfast-table in general confirmed her own secret fear. And if he were really crazy enough to speak, the result was a foregone conclusion. She would be asked to love, as a daughter, this alien girl, of whom she knew nothing except that she was not the real mate of the real Mark.

At the thought, a horrid sense of helplessness overwhelmed her. Open opposition would be worse than futile : yet smiling acquiescence was beyond her. Truth of intercourse—finest of all fine arts—was, for both mother and son, a necessity of their natures. To it they owed that deeper intimacy not often attained between one generation and another ; but, in the present dilemma, it would make things so much harder for them both that dread almost outweighed her longing for his return.

Breakfast ended, Ralph announced his intention of carrying both girls off for a long walk. Keith retired to the study with the 'Scotsman' and a formidable pile of correspondence, leaving Helen to her own devices. Nothing she liked better, in normal circumstances ; for her devices were many and absorbing. But to-day the silence and emptiness seemed to affect her like a ghostly presence, impalpable, yet vaguely threatening. A chill sense of impending disaster swept through her. She felt suddenly tired ; oppressed by the dead weight of the years that she carried with such valiant elasticity of body and spirit and heart.

Half a century of life had dulled but scarcely silvered her red-

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brown hair ; had pencilled fine lines between her brows and at the corners of her too sensitive mouth. But youth still triumphed in the eyes, in the slender alertness of her figure, in the swift impulsion of thought and speech. Yet she lived and felt life—the whole world's life—too intensely not to suffer moments of sharp reaction ; and this was one. Hitherto, she had seen Mark's marriage as the chance of regaining a daughter. Now she saw it, rather, as a risk of losing her son, and her heart cried out that this was more than she could bear. In the past twelve years, she had suffered loss on loss, with a sort of fierce stoicism, the nearest approach to resignation that one of her nature could achieve. Now, being a mere mother, she must stand aside and watch him drifting on to the rocks—

It simply did not bear thinking of ; and, gathering up her letters, she went in search of work, the unfailing anodyne for every ill.

At that time, under Keith's critical supervision, she was translating Emile Faguet. She was also studying Russian, with other translations in view ; and she had correspondents in all parts of Europe, many of whom she had never seen. But these activities were fringes merely on the main work of her life—the revival of arts and crafts and home industries among Mark's people, and the linking up of all similar efforts throughout the United Kingdom.

Yet, for all her activities and far-reaching aims, her true life had always been centred in her home. And she was content that it should be so ; content to let outsiders dub her 'Victorian' for refusing to be swept into the maelstrom of modern restlessness ; to let the 'progressives' swirl past her—social reformers, seekers after new religions, new panaceas for every ill ; content to find time for cultivating the art of friendship, not merely in her own class, but among Mark's tenants on both estates.

Leisure to possess her own soul and the hearts of others was, for her, a simple necessity of life ; and that very necessity, by limiting her sphere of action, was half the secret of her influence and charm. Ideals are uncomfortable things socially, but they have the merit of keeping their owners fresh ; and the world's more strenuous workers found, in her home atmosphere, a refreshment and inspiration worth some sacrifice of activity to preserve in an age of wholesale experiment in life and art and religion. They might rate her for living in a backwater ; but, as intimacy grew, they realised that she was more vitally in touch than themselves with the world's greater issues ; that her uneventful days were rich in experience, informed by a central purpose and an

unshaken faith in certain abiding truths—periodically obscured and neglected, yet as certain to return with power as sunshine after rain.

‘When religion decays and irreligion prevails, then I manifest Myself. For the protection of good, for the destruction of evil, and for the firm establishment of national righteousness, I am born again and again.’

Krishna’s ancient prophecy, printed in gold on an illuminated scroll, confronted her as she entered her sanctuary. The scroll had been a birthday ‘surprise’ from Mark; an achievement of schoolboy days when he was altogether her own; and the thought upset her equanimity afresh.

Look where she would, the room was full of him: a friendly, intimate room, set in the bastioned tower that dated from feudal times. But arrow-slits had long given place to unlimited light and air; and, like all rooms that are loved and genuinely lived in, it was quick with the personality of one who imparted something of herself to the very chair she used and the books and pictures on her walls. These last were few and individual; but of the books there was no end. A catholic assembly, they climbed the only bit of wall-space not occupied by the grate. They stood about invitingly in revolving cases; and a privileged company was piled upon the floor near her chair. Keith often accused her of having an untidy mind: and the state of her room betrayed her. The one tidy spot was the writing-table, which she never used.

Over the mantelpiece hung an early portrait of her husband, that might almost have been a portrait of Mark. But Sir Richard’s face was heavier than his son’s; the brow more massive, the lower lip more prominent. It was a shrewd, virile Anglo-Saxon face, unilluminated by the Gaelic strain that Mark had from his mother.

Yet, throughout, Sir Richard had respected his wife’s ideals and enthusiasms, had smiled indulgently over her panacea for the democratic peril, and had allowed her a fairly free hand in the education of his sons. So long as the heir of Wynchcombe Friars remained a staunch Imperialist, he might be as constructive as he pleased: and if there was the remotest truth in Helen’s convictions, let Mark stand for Hampshire and air his views in Parliament. That had been Sir Richard’s practical contribution to the subject.

But the Baronet had now been dead ten years; and, so far, Mark had made no bid for Parliamentary fame. Helen Forsyth had spent the first years of her widowhood travelling in Europe with

Keith and Mark, who gave promise of developing into a sculptor of originality and power. For his benefit as an artist they had lived mainly in Florence, Rome, and Greece, with a bias in favour of the first. For in the great Florentine, young Mark had found his acknowledged master of his own thoughtful yet fiery spirit. But, for his education as a man, Lady Forsyth had insisted on more than a nodding acquaintance with the rest of Europe ; and finally Mark had spent two years reading voraciously at Oxford, largely with the art and labour problem in view.

Since his coming of age, he had devoted himself heart and soul to sculpture and the management of his estates. But the notion of Parliament still remained in abeyance. The rise of the lawyer-politician and the commercial magnate had intensified his native distrust of democracy, while the increasing narrowness and bitterness of party spirit had effectually quenched his natural ambition to stand for the county of his birth. One Forsyth uncle already represented the family. In Mark's opinion that sufficed ; and neither Keith nor his mother had quarrelled with his decision.

It was as artist and responsible landowner that she longed to see him pre-eminent ; and every year he had given clearer promise of fulfilling her hope. At seven-and-twenty there remained only the last and most critical achievement—his marriage. On this score alone he had caused her more than one flutter of anxiety ; and now— !

She clenched her teeth to keep back the futile curse ; and, for the next hour or so, kept her attention chained to the intricate task of transposing idiomatic phrases and fine shades of meaning from one language into another.

It was nearly twelve when the door opened and Sheila appeared, bringing the 'Times' and the mid-day post : Sheila, with a bright spot of colour in each cheek and a smile that radiated sweetness and light. How on earth could Mark— ? But that bitter, useless question was taboo.

Her own smile was more natural than it had been at breakfast ; but Sheila did not fail to detect the lurking shadow in her eyes, nor the significant fact that she did not eagerly tear open the paper and plunge into the latest letter from Belfast.

'Mums, haven't you spent enough of this glorious morning grinding at Emile Faguet ?' she said, kneeling down and laying a hand over the open page. 'You look tired—worried.'

'I am worried,' Lady Forsyth admitted with a direct look, and Sheila's colour ebbed a little.

'Unhappy, are you—a bout Mark?' she asked very low.

'Yes. Haven't I reason to be?'

'But, Mums—she seems a very sweet person. And if he cares—'

'My dear, you're as bad as the rest of them about that girl.'

Lady Forsyth was so rarely impatient with her that Sheila set her lips a moment before venturing further. 'Well, you know, she is extraordinarily attractive.'

'Is she? I don't see it.'

'Isn't that, perhaps, because—you won't see it?'

'Sheila!'

'Dearest—I'm sorry. But surely he must know her better than we do, because—he cares. And you don't give her a chance if you shut your heart against her. It's so unlike you. And it will be very hard on Mark . . . if she—'

'Oh, child, be quiet!' Championship from this quarter was intolerable; and setting her hands on the girl's shoulders she gave them a gentle shake. 'There's no call to waste any of your sweet pity on Mark. If he speaks to-day—and I have a horrid feeling he will—she's not likely to refuse him. And that's all he cares about at the moment. I'm not being unjust to him, dear. I'm facing the truth; which is sometimes quite as difficult as facing cannon. But—well, I can't talk about it. You talk, instead. You haven't told me half enough yet about India. I've an idea—something happened out there. Am I right?'

The girl nodded, looking out seaward. 'I've been wanting to tell you and yet rather shirking it. This one—hurt me a good deal.'

'Another "poor thing"?'

'Yes; badly poor. What Mark would call a worm. The third in two and a half years! I begin to be ashamed of myself! And—a little afraid too.' She paused. 'Mums, because I'm not a wobbler myself, will it always be the wobbling men who insist on clinging to me? Shall I perhaps be driven by this troublesome law of opposites to choose between marrying some pitifully lovable "poor thing" or—never marrying at all? Not lively alternatives—are they?'

Lady Forsyth's hand slipped from the girl's shoulder to her waist. 'Darling, I hope it won't come to that.'

'So do I. Naturally I'd . . . prefer to marry. I—' she hesitated and coloured a little, 'I would feel desolate . . . without children. Am I very . . . premature?'

Lady Forsyth drew her close and kissed her warm cheek.

'You're very woman,' she said. 'And Fate may have better things in store for you than the most importunate wobbler of them all. I hope you discouraged this last one more decisively than his predecessor.'

Sheila shook her head. 'I simply couldn't. They do tug badly at my heart-strings. No denying it.'

'I suppose that means he's still hanging on? And hurting you every time he gives a fresh tug? A fine exhibition of masculine selfishness!'

'Mums, he doesn't realise it hurts. And—he has so much against him: if you only knew—'

'Well, I *want* to know.' Pushing aside her manuscript she drew a low stool close to her chair, and Sheila settled down on it, with a small sigh of content. 'Now tell me. What has he against him?'

'Loneliness and poor health; and an ugly little desert station at the end of nowhere; and hating the country—and—and drink!'

'Darling! You've outdone yourself this time!'

Sheila turned quickly. 'Please stop bothering about me, and be sorry for him. You would be, if you'd seen him. So worn and sallow; though he's barely thirty. Clever—very. Too many brains and too few convictions, I used to tell him. And then, there had been a girl—when he was home on his first leave. She made violent friends with him: drew him on till he lost his heart to her; only to find that she had deliberately used him as a stalking-horse for another man, who afterwards turned out to be married already. He heard that she went off with him in spite of it, but *that* he can't believe. A dismal tale, isn't it? The trouble was he couldn't stop loving her, even though he knew she was worthless—'

'Until he found in my beautiful Sheila the privileged bit of sticking-plaster to mend his heart!' Lady Forsyth interrupted her with a touch of heat. 'I wonder he had the face to tell you—'

'He didn't tell me till I'd refused him—twice. Then we had a long talk and he poured out all his bottled-up miseries. And I wasn't *only* a bit of sticking-plaster. He'd stopped loving her long ago. Do be fair to him, Dearest. You're in a wicked mood to-day!'

'I've never been in a worse. And the tale of your latest "poor thing" isn't exactly a specific for the blues! How about the drinking? And what was the final understanding, after refusals followed by confidences?'

The hand that rested on her knee moved in a slow, soothing caress. 'I'm afraid you won't approve. Ralph didn't. But I overruled him. He—Mr. Seldon—begged me so hard not to throw him over altogether that I said he might write once a month. And the thing that arrives is more like an intimate diary than a letter. He *can* write, Mums. And he isn't drinking—like he was. That was part of the compact. It began in a bad cholera season: no one to notice; no one to care. He says the average man never realises, till he has to spend months alone, that what he calls the voice of his conscience is much more often the voice of other people's! So now—I'm his "other people"! He gave me his word and he writes quite honestly about it. If ever he really slips back again he says he'll stop writing and chuck everything.—There! That's my poor little tale, I'm happier now it's out. You may scold me; but you'd have done just the same yourself!'

For answer, Lady Forsyth put both arms round her and kissed her fervently. 'Be as angelic as you please to your poor things, darling,' she said. 'But for heaven's sake don't marry them.'

'I couldn't,' Sheila answered softly. 'I'd sooner—go without.'

In the silence that followed Lady Forsyth felt as if the girl must hear her vehement thoughts. But very soon Sheila spoke again.

'I told Mr. Seldon about our little colony of arts and crafts, and he is ever so interested. He says machinery's gaining ground fearfully fast in India; cheapening and speeding up everything and killing the craftsman's joy in his work, just as it's done over here. I had a letter yesterday. He enclosed some Indian designs for carving. I *must* show you.'

She ran off to fetch them; and thenceforward 'shop' banished every subject from the field. They were still at it when the gong sounded for lunch, and half the interminable day was gone.

Lunch would be rather an effort. Helen's eager interest in the panorama of life made it a matter of course that she should lead the talk at table, and she was in no mood for it to-day.

To her relief, she found herself spared the trouble. Keith, who had an uncanny knack of divining her needs, came in armed with a book that had arrived by the second post and made havoc of his morning's work. His feigned inability to part with it was obviously an excuse to make it the main topic of the meal.

'Calls itself an "Essay on the Confusion of the Arts,"' he said, placing a spare knife between the leaves. 'I ordered it for Mark

on Stoddart's recommendation. But I'm inclined to think the book really belongs to you. The writer upholds so many of your pet convictions. Listen here.' The knife was removed. 'Don't you seem to recognise your own voice? "Anyone who makes a stand for vital and humane concentration is set down as a mere laggard or reactionary, whereas he may find himself, rather, a pioneer and leader of a forlorn hope—not all forlorn. . . . The revival of broad, vigorous, masculine distinctions between art and art alone can save us from the confusions that have crept into modern life and literature, and which I trace to two main sources—emotional unrestraint and pseudo-science. . . . To set colour above design, illusion above informing purpose, suggestion above symmetry, is to set the feminine virtues above the masculine—and that has been the chief cause of the corruption of art and literature in the past century."

An indictment so sweeping roused Mona, fresh from her Oxford triumphs. 'But, Mr. Macnair, I call that heresy!' she protested; and Keith smiled indulgently at her unusual warmth.

'Heresy, my dear young lady, is, after all, only the truth as seen by the fellow in the opposite camp. And there still remain certain unregenerates in the other camp who are praying for the rediscovery of Man.'

'Or a German invasion!' murmured Lady Forsyth. 'With apologies to Mona, I'm afraid nothing milder will save us from the petticoat peril!'

At that Ralph looked up from his mayonnaise. In a wilderness of abstractions, here was something he could understand.

'I say, Lady Forsyth! Rather a costly form of salvation, don't you think?'

'Salvation is always costly, Ralph,' she answered him gravely. 'And it is always worth the price paid.'

Here Mona struck in again; and the argument, as Keith had intended, carried them well through lunch.

The meal over they adjourned to the shade of three ancient pines on the terrace; but very soon Ralph, who was frankly bored, persuaded Mona to come out on the loch, and Keith's contentment was complete.

The new book lasted them till tea-time. Then, as none of the wanderers re-appeared, he was persuaded to fetch his translations and read them to the audience of two for whom they had probably been written, if the truth were known. It was sometimes said of

Macnair that men delighted in his lectures almost as much for the quality of his voice as for the lucidity of his thought: and to-day, when instrument and music were in perfect accord, the effect on Helen's troubled, sensitive spirit was all that he could have desired. She possessed in full measure the artist's gift of surrender to a mood. Sheer beauty of thought and language, serene and splendid harmonies, drawn from the discords of life, stirred her like organ music; and for Keith her abstracted silence was the quintessence of praise.

Suddenly, round a bend of the loch, a white sail dipped into view:—and the spell was broken. Keith, who had seen it also, still read on; but he no longer had the ear of her spirit. She was simply listening for the sound of Mark's footstep—and another.

To her relief the scrunch of gravel, when it came, plainly bespoke masculine boots. Then the two men appeared round the corner of the house, and Mark waved his stick. Bobs, who had been left at home, flung himself headlong on his recovered master with little sobbing squeals of joy, and, for one wild moment, hope revived in Helen's heart.

'Well, you three look jolly comfortable there,' Mark greeted them, as he came up; and it was Keith who answered him. His mother seemed to be looking for her scissors. One glance at his face had sufficed.

CHAPTER V.

'Of love it may be said, the more unearthly, the more invisible.'

HARDY.

THE first moment that escape was decently possible, Lady Forsyth left the group under the pines and went straight to her bedroom. Mark would follow her, of course; but she had desperate need of a few minutes' breathing space. She knew now that what Keith called 'the brave old wisdom of acceptance' was still far from her; that she had not really faced the truth till she saw it in Mark's eyes. And while her pulses still throbbed unevenly his voice sounded at the door.

'Mother, can I come in?' he asked; and the next moment stood before her—a glowing embodiment of victory.

'Congratulate me, Mums,' he said. 'I've brought off the great event with honours. Miss Alison—Bel has promised to be my wife.'

'I know. I have known it—all day,' she answered him, with a brave attempt at a smile.

'More than I have! Hadn't the cheek to count on her. It was rather sharp work, and I'm not what you might call a fascinating chap. But I simply couldn't wait. It's the most amazing luck—'

He broke off as if he had come into actual collision with her thought. For nearly half a minute she endured the challenging scrutiny of his gaze. Then: 'Mother, what's up?' he asked, in a changed voice. 'Aren't you going to congratulate me?'

She drew in a steadyng breath. He had given her a cue that made plain speaking a shade less difficult.

'My darling boy,' she said quietly, 'I've never played at pretences with you and I can't do it now. You admit this has been sharp work. And, honestly, I wish you had waited. I should have thought better of your judgment and the quality of—your love.'

He frowned sharply. 'Oh Lord, I didn't come here for a preaching. The last thing one would expect from you. I suppose it means you've taken one of your prejudices against her.'

'Dear, I don't *know* her yet. No more do you.'

'Well, anyway, I love her. Strikes me that's the straightest road to knowledge. And as she loves me—'

'Did she tell you so, Mark—quite unmistakably?'

'Well, of course,' he retorted with rising temper; and was suddenly confronted by the realisation that Bel had done nothing of the kind. The discovery made him angrier than ever; but there was no untruthfulness in him. 'I don't know about unmistakably. You don't expect a girl to make passionate declarations. Isn't the fact of her accepting me proof enough for anyone?'

'Is it?' Lady Forsyth had herself in hand now, and she could not forgo her one chance of candour even while she perceived the futility of reasoning with a man in his exalted state. 'Don't you realise that, in your case, there are . . . other factors. Your position, your title . . .'

'My—? Great Scott!' he stood speechless. The thing had simply not occurred to him. Title and position were, for him, as much a matter of course as the hair on his head. Then, as surprise subsided, anger flared up again. 'Upon my soul, Mother, I don't know what's come to you. One would hardly think it was from you I'd learnt to credit people with the best motives. Are you

trying to insinuate that she may have fooled me? Accepted all my worldly goods under a pretence of caring——?’

‘No: not pretence,’ she interrupted, with a flash of impatience. ‘How *can* I make myself clear to you if you won’t let me finish a sentence? I mean that your sudden infatuation—I can call it nothing else—might very well turn any girl’s head and tempt her to imagine herself in love with you when she is really in love with the whole thing; flattered—attracted——’

‘Mother, be quiet! I *will* not hear you!’ There was pain as well as anger in the cry. ‘You don’t understand her. You won’t try to understand her. You’re simply jealous—prejudiced. And I was counting on you—oh, confound it all——’

He swung round on his heel and strode away from her that she might not see how deeply he was wounded by the failure of one who had never failed him yet.

And she, feeling suddenly exhausted, sank down on the sofa near which she had been standing; her lips compressed; her face strained and hard.

The silence lasted little more than a minute; but to both it seemed interminable. Their deep and real devotion had never been less apparent than now: yet, even in that antagonistic pause each knew it unshaken, unshakable, by anything that either might say or do. Hence its infinite capacity for inflicting pain.

Mark remained standing by the window; and Lady Forsyth’s answer, when it came, was addressed to the unpromising outline of his back and shoulders.

‘If you won’t hear me, Mark, there is no more to be said. It has been difficult enough to speak at all at such a moment——’

‘Then I wish to God you’d held your tongue,’ he flashed round upon her. ‘You haven’t succeeded in shaking my faith—in her. You’ve only taken the shine out of the happiest day of my life. If that’s any consolation to you!’

Without giving her time to answer he swung out of the room; and the trivial fact that he refrained from slamming the door seemed cruelly to emphasise that his words had not been spoken in temper, but wrung from him by the bitterness of disappointment and hurt pride.

For a time she remained as he had left her, sitting very still and upright, looking into vacancy. Then she covered her face and bowed her head upon the carved end of the sofa. But no tears came. She would not suffer them. She was still too angry with Fate,

with Mark, and, above all, with the girl who had so transformed him. And tears, after forty, hurt too poignantly to bring relief. She was suffering, merely, and realising the power of those words, spoken by them both in the heat of the spirit, to disfigure the finer fabric of their lives. Between two natures equally frank and fiery, lightning flashes of temper were inevitable ; but never before had they revealed such threatening depths of division. Worst of all, that division could not be hidden from others. The fact and the reason would be obvious to them all : a thought intolerable to her sensitive pride that shrank from scrutiny even of sympathetic eyes.

And to-morrow—and to-morrow—?

The ghost of a shiver ran through her. Life with an estranged Mark and an unloved daughter-in-law was the last impossibility. She was a fool to have spoken while the ardour and thrill of possession were so fresh upon him. Yet, had she kept silence, he would eventually have forced the truth from her. It was the price of her proudest achievement ; but it cannot be said that she paid it willingly—

At this point her thoughts were checked by the sound of his footstep. She might have known he would come. Instantly she was on her feet : her heart too full of relief for any thought of what she should say.

Outside the door he paused—and she held her breath. Then, very gently, he turned the handle and came in.

The temper had gone out of his face but not the pain. He came straight up to her and set both hands on her shoulders. ‘Mother, I’m sorry,’ he said simply. ‘I was a brute. But one doesn’t expect unfairness from you.’

‘Darling, it was clumsy of me—I didn’t mean to be unfair,’ she answered, grasping his wrists. ‘But it’s always been the truth between us. I couldn’t insult you with empty insincerities.’

‘And it didn’t strike you that you were insulting *her*?’

His fervent stress on the pronoun was indiscreet, to say the least of it, and Lady Forsyth winced visibly.

‘Mums, don’t be a fool,’ he said, with gruff tenderness, gently pressing her down on to the sofa. ‘If you’re going to start with being jealous—’

‘It’s not jealousy, Mark.’

‘Then what the deuce is it ?’

One thought sprang to both their minds, but neither could or would speak it.

'We've got to know where we stand about this business,' Mark went on. 'If you're going to dislike and distrust her, the position's impossible. The trouble is, she suspects something of the sort. But of course I told her it was all rot. Mother, you simply *must* be good to her. She seems to have had a pretty rank time of it with her own people.'

'In what way?'

'D'you really care to hear?'

'Of course I do, seeing how vitally her past concerns your future.'

Mark grimaced indulgently. 'Can't you drop me and take a little decent interest in her?'

'I'll try—if you'll give me a chance! What about her people, and this Miss O'Neill. I've often wondered—'

He told her, in clipped phrases, pacing to and fro, as his habit was when moved or trying to express his thoughts. He seldom sat down except to eat or read; and always seemed most completely himself when squarely planted on his feet.

His version of Bel's very mixed experiences—glorified inevitably—failed to dispel his mother's instinctive sense of something lacking in the girl, precisely what, it was too soon to tell.

'Poor child!' she said, when he had finished. 'I wonder—how old is she?'

Mark frowned. 'I haven't the remotest. We didn't exchange birth certificates. About five-and-twenty—'

'More than that.'

'Well, if she was forty it would make no earthly difference,' he retorted. 'The point is—will you be decent to her, if it's only for my sake? She doesn't seem ever to have had a home worth mentioning. I want her to feel she has a real one here.'

She sighed and rose to her feet. 'Darling, I'll do my best.' A deep metallic sound vibrated through the house—'Good gracious! There's dinner and I haven't changed.'

'Who cares? You look awfully sweet in that blue thing. Come along.'

He slipped a hand through her arm and led her out on to the landing. But at the head of the stairs he paused. A vision of Sheila skimming down the lower flight reminded him sharply that

there were others to be told. There were also congratulations to be endured. |

‘ I say, Mums, you might go ahead and break the ice,’ he said, giving her a gentle forward push. ‘ I feel most beastly shy of them all.’

Shyness was the least part of her own acute discomfort ; but the obedience of a wife is as nothing to that of a well-trained mother. So she went before to do his bidding ; and, being a mother, she would not have had it otherwise. Indeed the boyish request, following upon his casual compliment, seemed to bring her nearer to him than she had felt for days.

But in spite of her good services, Mark found dinner, flavoured with discreet congratulations, a singularly unappetising meal. His mother’s doubtful attitude worried him more than he cared to confess. Amongst the others also, he felt—or imagined—a lack of genuine sympathy in the air ; and the obvious word ‘ congratulation ’ was conspicuous by its absence. Pure accident, no doubt : but it jarred. Of a sudden he felt vaguely ‘ out of it,’ and more than a little aggrieved that his happiness—which should have added the perfecting touch to their summer party—seemed instead to have put things indefinitely out of gear.

Matters were not much better in the drawing-room after dinner—the friendliest hour of the day at Inveraig. Keith took up a book. Lady Forsyth obliterated herself behind the ‘ Times ’ ; and Sheila, soon after the men came in, slipped quietly out of the room. Ralph, kicking his heels on the window-seat, proposed Bridge. Mark refused without ceremony ; and Maurice proceeded to monopolise Miss Videlle, by way of reward for duty done.

Mark, in his highly strung mood, felt unjustifiably annoyed with them all, and the more he suspected their lack of sympathy the more his chivalrous nature swerved towards Bel. He gave it up at last and decided to go to the Rowans. There at least he would be welcome and could talk naturally.

‘ I’m going for a stroll, Mother,’ he announced to the vast expanse of the ‘ Times.’ ‘ Leave something unlocked if I’m late.’

He wondered—would Keith offer to accompany him ? But Keith made no move.

In the hall his happy impulse was checked by the recollection of Harry—probably antagonistic and quite certain to speak her mind without reserve. His unexpected appearance might only make things difficult for Bel. He felt checked at every turn.

'Oh damn it all!' he muttered aloud, and in the same breath caught sight of Sheila coming slowly downstairs.

The light falling on her from above burnished the outward sweeping waves of her dark hair, made shadowed mysteries of her eyes, and luminously caressed the curves of her face, that, like her voice, was at once clear-cut and soft. Her high-waisted, silver-grey gown added a cubit to her stature; and Mark, watching her unperceived, was smitten afresh by her natural wild-flower grace, the very antithesis of Bel's more exotic charm. Seen thus, Sheila looked no less than beautiful; but Mark's mind, just then, was concentrated on Bel. If only could he enlist Sheila's championship, the girl would have twice the chance with his mother.

Straightway he resolved on a direct appeal, and going quickly forward, planted himself on the mat, one hand grasping the balustrade.

She started and came to a standstill two steps above him, so that their eyes were almost level.

'What is it? Mums wanting me?' she asked, and he thought she looked paler than usual, but perhaps it was only the light.

'No. *I* am though,' he said, with his usual directness. 'Are you frightfully busy? Or frightfully bored with me and my engagement?'

'Neither,' she answered, a smile flickering in her eyes. 'Why?'

'Well, the rest seem to be. And Mother was quite upset. I had no end of a scene with her.'

'Poor darling!' Sheila murmured distressfully, and Mark made a whimsical grimace.

'Which? Her or me?'

Her pallor vanished. 'Mums, of course. Still, I'm sorry all round. It'll spoil things for you both.'

'Rather! But I'm thinking you could do a deal to smooth matters, Sheila—if you choose. It's Bel I'm bothered about. I want you all to make her feel welcome. And things don't look promising so far. Come out for a stroll, will you? I've a lot to say.'

'I'd love to.'

He stood back to make way for her, and as she reached his side his hand closed lightly on her arm. 'Sure you'll be warm enough in this?' he said.

She nodded and went rather quickly on before him into the garden.

Avoiding the terrace, they turned into a coppice of birch and pine, and so passed out on to an open stretch of heather, duskily purple and bronze in the fading light.

Mark did most of the talking, and—in the repetition of her story to more sympathetic ears—Bel shone out with fresh lustre as the heroine of a plucky, if somewhat erratic, fight against the tyranny of circumstance and unfavourable early surroundings.

Sheila listened to it all in her quietly intent fashion that was balm to the excitable natures of both mother and son. She had the true gift for listening, which is even rarer than the gift of speech; and for Mark her silence had a quality of its own. It was a living thing, alert and aware. When a man felt worried it seemed to distil a sympathy that called for no embarrassing response. And her brief contributions to their talk were more than satisfactory.

Of course she would love his Bel as a sister, and 'Mums' would be sure to come round in time. To doubt it were a poor compliment to Bel, she reminded him; and he wondered how he had overlooked that obvious truth.

Only once she spoke of herself. 'You know, I'm afraid,' she said, 'however well things turn out, Mums will never quite be able to put her in my place. And I'm also afraid . . . , ' she hesitated and looked up at him, 'that I wouldn't have it otherwise.'

'No more would I,' he agreed, with sudden fervour. 'You belong—to us both. And you always will.'

When, at length, darkness and falling dew drove them in, she had charmed him completely from his mood of vague doubt and irritation. But for the new name on his lips, and the stir of excitement in his veins, it was almost as if they were the Mark and Sheila of a month ago: almost—but not quite.

In the hall he held out his hand. 'I'd rather not go in there again. Tell them I haven't gone out, will you?' he paused. 'I'm a rotten hand at saying things, Sheila. But, somehow, you've made everything look different. And you'll square Mother all right. I can trust you.'

He grasped her hand harder than he realised; but she bore it without wincing.

'Yes, Mark,' she said, 'you can trust me. I'll do my very best.'

And none knew better than he the measure of her very best. He ran upstairs with a lighter heart. One could rely on Sheila, though the heavens fell; and his doubts—as she had said—were

an injustice to Bel, who would probably twist them all—including his mother—round her little finger, once she set herself to the task. His last thought was of their meeting on the morrow. But it was Sheila's face, softly radiant in the lamplight, that perversely haunted his dreams.

CHAPTER VI.

'Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot,
And all things turn to fair that eyes can see! . . .
Both grace and faults are loved of more and less:
Thou makest faults graces that to thee resort.'

SHAKESPEARE.

MARK stepped back from his modelling pedestal and critically surveyed the result of his morning's work—a terra-cotta study of Contemplation, inspired by his vision of Bel under the birch-tree on that day of very mixed memories which seemed infinitely more than two weeks ago.

The small statue, classic in its serenity and simplicity of treatment, was a perfect thing of its kind ; as unlike the bulk of Mark's rugged, individual studies as Bel's whole attitude to life was unlike his own. Every line of it rested the eye, even as the girl's cool deliberate nature rested his own ceaselessly questing brain.

So far he had found no trace in her of the hidden conflict between spirit and matter that was the keynote of his art. Already he recognised her spasmodic rebellions rather as a series of skilful evasions that implied no deep questioning of life or desire of knowledge. She was not a genuine rebel, like Miss O'Neill. Almost he suspected her of being an impressionist in life. But doubts and discoveries notwithstanding, the charm still held, and would probably continue to hold—irrespective of anything that she might be or do. Incidentally, she was proving herself an admirable model. This was the third morning he had victimised her, and she was still enduring it with the patience of a Griselda ; still sitting, as she had sat for a good hour, on a long low stool at the far end of the room, in a blue wrapper with falling sleeves that revealed her arms. Elbows on knees, chin cradled in her hand—was she thinking, dreaming, or mildly bored ? He would have asked her had they been alone. But Lenox was ensconced in the

deep window-seat behind him, working at a post-impressionist pastel—a challenge to Mark's insistence on the classic note.

'Tired—are you?' he asked instead; and she gave him a sidelong glance with the slow lift of her lashes that still stirred him, though he knew it now for a conscious trick of manner. 'Could you hang on for another fifteen minutes without a serious collapse?'

'I could—just; if I may have a cigarette directly it's over.' Mark, as well she knew, held ridiculously old-fashioned opinions on that subject, and a cigarette just before lunch was the depth of demoralisation.

'I call that taking a mean advantage,' he reproved her without severity. 'But I admit you've earned it.'

'A very sustaining admission! And the prospect of getting it is more sustaining still!'

Her cool, provocative smile made him confound Lenox for being present, which was precisely what she intended. Then, with a sigh of resignation, she so to speak absented herself, and her gaze reverted to a large and vigorous bas-relief that occupied the centre of a deep wall-shelf right before her.

It was a recent achievement: a thing of signal beauty and power, as magnificently impetuous as the figure on the table was gracious and controlled. It portrayed the death of a Viking, self-immolated on the deck of his blazing barque in a storm off the coast of Norway. In the background, the savage peaks of the mainland were roughly indicated. The rest was a whirl of wind-battered clouds and waters, scrolls of smoke and twisted blades of fire that wreathed and devoured the doomed ship. Her prow, a Valkyrie with winged helmet and lifted spear, rode high on the crest of a wave, poised, as it were, for the flight to Valhalla when her hero on the sloping deck should have finished his last fight. And it was not finished yet. Raised on one elbow, his head flung upward, his long locks, beard and eyebrows were blown abroad by the wind. He seemed less to be awaiting the stroke of death, than rejoicing in the majestic duel between the gods of fire and storm. Though dwarfed by his mighty surroundings, that dying fragment of flesh and bone and sinew dominated all—a serene and splendid figure of defiance; a symbol, finely conceived and wrought, of the unconquering yet unconquered spirit of man. That, for Mark, had been the inner significance of his theme, above and beyond his sheer joy in the swirl of the tempest, with one quenchless

spark of human will and courage for the point of stillness in the midst.

For days, while working at it, he had scarcely been off his feet or sat down to a meal, and his final spurt of inspiration had kept him going from breakfast-time one day till four o'clock next morning. The thing was unquestionably his finest achievement yet. He had put more of himself into it than into any work of his hands; and he wondered, now, whether Bel was seeing it merely as a vigorous bit of drama, or feeling it, understanding it, as every artist craves that his work should be felt and understood.

She had made few comments when first he showed her his studio, his inner self, except that she had not realised she was going to marry a genius and she hoped he was not one of the too uncomfortable kind. He had promptly reassured her by waiving all claim to genius and promising not to be 'uncomfortable' if he could possibly avoid it. A faint, very faint, twinge at his heart had been loyally ignored; and before long she had charmed him—almost—into forgetfulness that it had ever been there.

Still, it could not be said that they made swift progress in intimacy. One day she would seem exquisitely near him, and the next would slip distractingly out of reach. At first this had puzzled him. Then he suspected it of being deliberate; and suspicion was tinged with resentment. He neither understood nor appreciated the feline element inherent in certain women. Nor did he relish the suspicion that at times Bel could, and did, play upon him, as a skilled musician plays upon an instrument; that she could even exasperate him to the point of fury without losing an iota of her charm. That charm she was at small pains to exercise on the other members of the household, except in the case of Maurice and Ralph. With them it was instinctive, simply; with the rest it would have been something of an effort, which apparently was not worth making.

As regards Lady Forsyth—though Sheila had been better than her word—things did not, so far, look promising. Just at first, for Mark's sake, the two had made a genuine effort at friendliness; but on both sides the effort was so much more in evidence than the friendliness that they very soon found themselves tacitly avoiding any attempt at intimate talk. For this unhappy state of things Mark, not unnaturally, blamed his mother rather than Bel. She, after all, was the older woman. A convincing lead

from her might have worked wonders ; but the very sincerity he had always so loved in her had now become a stone of stumbling. That he could understand, being cast in the same mould. What he secretly resented was her blindness—wilful or otherwise—to Bel's charm ; to the sweetness and goodness in her that would only, he fancied, blossom freely in an atmosphere of sympathetic appreciation, his mother's most notable gift. How deeply he had counted on this, he now began to realise ; but for fear of hurting her and making matters worse, he bridled his tongue, with the result that he, too, found himself avoiding occasions for personal talk. His people, it seemed, could not, or would not, assimilate Bel ; while Bel's whole attitude politely implied that she was marrying him, not his people. But they three—his mother, Keith, and Sheila—were so closely linked with his main interest in life that it was hard to see how matters would range themselves when it came to the point of marriage. And he intended to marry soon. An engagement was an unsatisfactory state of affairs, and there was nothing to wait for that he could see—

' There ! The fifteen minutes is up,' he said suddenly, consulting his watch and stepping back again for another critical survey. ' I won't keep you a second longer. She shall have her finishing touches to-morrow.'

Bel rose, yawned, stretched herself gracefully at some length, and then stood smiling at him, hands clasped behind her head.

Maurice—unnoticed by Mark, but not by Bel—took up a fresh piece of paper and began a lightning sketch of her pose.

' You're a model of a model ! ' Mark commended her warmly. Then his gaze moved from her to the bas-relief, as if contrasting the two things he loved almost equally with two different sides of his nature.

' Have you made friends with my Viking ? ' he asked, and she pursed her lips as if considering.

' Frankly—I've tried to ; but I can't. The wind of him blows even one's thoughts about. He's magnificent, of course. But too stormy and uncomfortable for my taste ; so uncomfortable that I was rather wondering how you could have enjoyed doing him ? '

Mark raised his eyebrows. ' That doesn't lend itself to explanation,' he said lightly. ' Some sort of natural affinity, perhaps. I'm a bit stormy and uncomfortable myself, in certain moods.' He opened his cigarette-case and held it out to her. ' I apologise

for blowing your thoughts about. We'll change your view to-morrow.'

'Now you're angry!' she said sweetly, taking a cigarette and tapping it on the back of her hand. As she did so a half hoop of diamonds flashed into view. 'Honesty's *not* the best policy, let the copy-books never so virtuously rage!'

'I prefer it anyway,' he said. 'Have a light.' He struck a match and held it for her. 'I hope my Lady of Dreams is more to your taste. She's warranted not to stir the ghost of a breeze in anyone's thoughts!'

Bel came forward now and contemplated herself with undisguised satisfaction. 'Mark, you *have* improved her. She's lovely!'

'Naturally. She can't help herself, bless her,' he said under his breath, for the pure pleasure of calling up a blush. 'Now then, Lenox,' he added aloud, 'have you the cheek to produce your caricature of my future wife?'

'Rather!' Maurice promptly held up for inspection a curious blur of blues and greens, of pale gold hair and flesh tints of doubtful fleshliness. After some looking, the suggestion of a woman emerged; and later still, a ghostly suggestion of Bel. It was unquestionably clever—and nothing more. Mark laughed aloud.

'Call that a portrait! By the yellow blob on the top one would just know which way to hang it!'

'Mark, you're very rude!' Bel waved him aside with her cigarette. 'It's queer and perverse; but *I* rather like it.'

Maurice sprang to his feet and executed a low bow. 'Miss Alison, it is yours——'

He broke off and straightened himself, for the door opened to admit Keith with the 'Times' in his hand. 'Your mother wants lunch at once,' he said. 'I'm driving her into Ardmuir early on business. Would you care to come?'

'Thanks, no. We've a private picnic on, across the loch.'

Mark glanced at the open sheet. 'Any fresh news?'

'A few more details about that Irish shooting affray: an ugly, ominous business. While our precious politicians are hurling epithets at each other, things over there are rapidly drifting towards bloodshed on a big scale.'

Mark's eyes flashed and he thrust out his chin. 'If fighting's imminent, the sooner you and I pack our things and cross over to Belfast the better. At least we can help to stiffen the ranks.'

'Mark—you don't *mean* that?' Bel broke in, a touch of sharpness in her startled tone.

'Every word of it,' he answered quietly, and Macnair's long mouth twitched as he looked from one to the other. 'I could name a dozen good fellows here who'd come with me like a shot.'

'But—what do *you* know about soldiering?'

He laughed. 'More than you think for. I've been put through my paces in the O.T.C. I can ride; I can flag-wag; and I'm a marksman, which is very much to the point. You've not discovered all my talents yet by any means!'

But Bel was scarcely listening. Her eyes were on Keith, whom already she recognised as an authority on most things, including Mark himself.

'You're not really going, are you, Mr. Macnair?' she asked in a tone of faint dismay. 'The Government would surely never let it get as far as Civil War.'

Keith, more charmed than he cared to own, reassured her with his kindliest smile. 'I sincerely hope not, Miss Alison, for all our sakes. This Austrian ultimatum to Serbia may very well set Europe ablaze; and at such a moment we should be worse than fools to start cutting each other's throats at home.'

Bel looked distinctly relieved. In spite of her American phase, she remained essentially an islander. For her, Europe was a vast vague region across the Channel, chiefly represented by Paris and the Riviera. But with Mark it was otherwise.

'I say, Keith,' he asked sharply, 'is that Serbian business really going to make things buzz? I've done no more than squint at headlines lately. And we've had such a surfeit of "Wolf, Wolf!" one gets a bit sceptical.'

Keith smiled. 'When you can find time to "squint" at two letters I've had from Vienna and Rome, you'll be sceptical no longer. If Austria wrings the last humiliation from little Serbia, Russia will be in it; which means France will be in it too—'

'In what, Mr. Macnair?' Bel's relief was swiftly evaporating.

'The conflagration of Europe,' Keith said gravely; and the plain statement sent an odd, uncomfortable thrill through them all.

'But we're not Europe. It would not mean us?'

Keith gave her a direct look. 'In my opinion, Miss Alison, we are Europe and it would mean us. Unless we recognise that obvious fact in time, we shall simply be marched over. Whether our

reigning politicians will take your view or mine, remains to be proved.—But there goes the gong. And we must feed, though dynasties fall !'

He hurried out and Maurice followed him.

As the door closed on them Mark, in his silent, impetuous fashion, turned and took the girl in his arms. 'Poor darling! Did I frighten her badly ?'

'No. You made her very angry !' she answered, in her most seductive voice; and for all apology he kissed her passionately.

'It *will* be all right, won't it ?' she questioned, still in her child-like vein.

'God knows. I hope it will,' he said. 'Anyway, if we *are* sitting on a live crater, we'll take our fill of peace and sunshine this afternoon. Come along !'

But at lunch there was more disturbing talk about Ireland. Mark still spoke of going over if the tension snapped, though Bel had taken his caresses for a sign of grace. Ralph clamoured to accompany him. Sheila threatened to beg, borrow, or steal a uniform and go with them. As for Lady Forsyth she seemed as bad as anyone. A spot of colour in each cheek heightened the blue of her eyes. She felt the whole tragic tangle of right and wrong keenly, vividly, as she felt everything, from a pin-prick to an earthquake in the antipodes; and, like all truly imaginative natures, she could sink the personal point of view when larger issues held the field. Bel, very wisely, kept silence. Anything she might have to say on the subject was for one ear alone. Meantime, she privately reiterated her opinion that Lady Forsyth was an odd, uncomfortable sort of person, quite unworthy to be the mother of Mark.

Lunch ended, the 'uncomfortable person' retreated to her turret-room to write a couple of notes before starting, and thither Mark followed her—an event so rare these days that she started when the door opened and he came in.

'Mother,' he plunged as usual, 'the others were mostly joking at lunch. But I meant what I said. Did you ?'

She looked up quickly, and her eyes caressed his fine, strong face. 'Of course I did.'

'Thought so. You *are* a real sportswoman, Mums.'

She sighed and smiled almost in one breath. 'A fair imitation ! That's nearer the truth. I shall pray more fervently than ever for a peaceful solution. Besides—' a tentative pause—'How about Bel ?'

'She'd be all right. Why shouldn't she ?'

But the touch of sharpness in his tone betrayed him—and Bel also. 'You might credit her with a few good qualities. She's got as many as most people if you'd honestly look for them. But you won't.'

'Dear, that's not true. You might try and be fair to me. I've done my best.'

'So has she, no doubt, though you probably haven't noticed it. But it seems precious little use either way. So the less said the better.' He swung round and took a step towards the door.

'Oh, Mark !' she murmured, and checked herself. He was right. Words only widened the breach. But the low sound brought him back to her side. 'Mums,' he said, a hand on her shoulder, 'is this rotten state of things always going on between us ?'

'Oh, I hope not.' She laid her fingers over his. '"My faith is large in time." We two impatient folk must manage to have patience with each other. The trouble is—forgive me, dear—I can find so little in her to take hold of. It's rather like trying to grasp a cloud. Later on I may arrive at the substance that must be there !'

'Yes, it's *there* right enough.' Mark's tone was curiously quiet, considering how she had dared. 'Are you yet convinced, Mother, that she cares, or do you still believe she's marrying my title and possessions ?'

Lady Forsyth started. 'Have you any doubt yourself ?'

'If I have, it's all your fault. What d'you really think ? Tell me.'

'I think she cares more now than she did at first, though not nearly so much as she ought to before she becomes your wife. You've won her, nominally, by the primitive process of snatching. But you've yet to win her actually. So don't be in a hurry to snatch at marriage. You're still comparative strangers. Give yourselves a year at least.'

'Oh Lord !' he groaned, 'I was thinking of Christmas. I'm blest if I could keep it up for a year.'

'Keep up—what ?' she asked, amused and amazed.

'Oh—you know !' he flung out an expressive hand. 'This lovering business. I'm not much of a hand at the sentimental touch. Little compliments and attentions and all that. *Your* fault again ! You haven't reared me that way. Mind you, it's not that I don't care——'

'Of course not!' Her amusement was full of understanding. 'It's only that you're even more of a Scot than I thought you were! Poor Bel!'

'Not a bit of it!' he retorted; but that first touch of sympathy pleased him. 'I believe I'm improving. But—after marriage, she wouldn't expect so much—eh?'

'She might—and she might not. Women mostly do. And when they marry the non-lovering type of Scot—they suffer. A friend of mine—an Irishwoman and childless—was so completely withered by ten years of life with a dour and devoted Scottish husband that she simply had to leave him, and to this day he doesn't understand why.'

'Hurry up, Helen! What's come to you?' Keith's voice rang out from the stairs; and Lady Forsyth leapt to her feet. 'Bad boy to delay me like this! But do give yourself time to get your hand in. Promise.'

He smiled at her characteristic urgency. She looked ridiculously, engagingly young, he thought, in her blue motor bonnet with its long veil floating over her shoulders, and the eyes that answered his smile were suspiciously bright. Obeying a rare impulse, he stooped and kissed them. 'Well—just to please you,' he said, 'I'll try and hang on till Easter.'

'Bless you!' she whispered. Then she waved to him from the threshold and was gone.

For several minutes he stood there looking round the familiar room—that still seemed alive with her presence—in a very mixed frame of mind. It was puzzling, and it hardly seemed right somehow; but the fact remained that, even now, this vivid, virile little mother of his was easily the biggest thing in his life. To please her he had promised to wait till Easter. Rather an unflattering discrepancy, when you came to think of it, between nine months' engagement and his original proposal to marry in a week. And, with a sudden twinge of compunction, he hurried out in search of Bel.

(To be continued.)

THE PINK-TAILED TANK.

BY BOYD CABLE.

FROM a hurriedly-constructed trench amongst the shell-holes the infantry watched a hurricane bombardment developing to their left on a redoubt, past and to the side of which the line had pushed, but in front of which it was held fast.

'Look at that, Ken. Sick 'em, gunners,' said one of a couple of men sheltering in a shell-hole.

'That's the talk ; smack 'em about.'

The gunners 'smacked 'em about' with fifteen savage minutes' deluge of light and heavy shells, blotting out the redoubt in a whirlwind of fire-flashes, belching smoke clouds and dust haze. Then suddenly the tempest ceased to play there, lifted and shifted, and fell roaring in a wall of fire and steel beyond the low slope which the redoubt crowned.

With past knowledge of what the lift and the further barrage meant, the two men in the shell-pit turned and craned their necks and looked out along the line.

'There they go,' said Ben suddenly, and 'Attacking round a half-circle,' said Ken. The British line was curved in a horseshoe shape about the redoubt, and the two men being out near one of the points could look back and watch clearly the infantry attack launching from the centre and half-way round the sides of the horseshoe. They saw the khaki figures running heavily, scrambling round and through the scattered shell-holes ; and presently as a crackle of rifle fire rose and rose and swelled to a sullen roar, with the quick rhythmic clatter of machine-guns beating through it, they saw also the figures stumbling and falling, the line thinning and shredding out and wasting away under the withering fire.

The sergeant dodged along the pit-edge above them. 'Covering fire,' he shouted. 'At four hundred—slam it in,' and disappeared. The two opened fire, aiming at the crest of the slope and beyond the tangle of barbed wire which alone indicated the position of the redoubt. They only ceased to fire when they saw the advanced fringe of the line, of a line by now woefully thinned and weakened, come to the edge of the barbed wire and try to force a way through it.

'They're beat,' gasped Ben. 'They're done in . . . ' and

cursed long and bitterly, fingering nervously at his rifle the while. 'Time we rung in again,' said Ken. 'Aim steady and pitch 'em well clear of the wire.' The two opened careful fire again while the broken remnants of the attacking line ran and hobbled and crawled back or into the cover of shell-holes. A second wave flooded out in a new assault, but by now the machine-gun fire had attained to irresistible force, the German artillery joined in to help it, and the new line was cut down, broken and beaten back, before it had covered half the distance to the entanglements. The two men and others of their battalion near them could only curse helplessly as they watched the tragedy, and ply their rifles in slender hope of some of their bullets finding those unseen loopholes and embrasures.

'An' wot's the next item o' the programme, I wonder?' said Ben half an hour after the last attack had failed, half an hour filled with a little shooting, a good deal of listening to the pipe and whistle of overhead bullets and the rolling thunder of the guns, a watching of the shells falling and spouting earth and smoke on the defiant redoubt.

'Reinforcements and another butt in at it, I expect,' surmised Ken. 'Don't see anything else for it. Looks like this pimple-on-the-map of a redoubt was holdin' up any advance ont his front. Anyhow, I'm not hankering to go pushin' on with that redoubt bunch shootin' holes in my back, which they'd surely do.'

'Wot's all the buzz about be'ind us?' said Ben suddenly, raised himself for a quick look over the covering edge of earth behind him, and in the act of dropping again stopped and stared with raised eyebrows and gaping mouth.

'What is it?' said Ken quickly and also rose, and also stayed risen and staring in amazement. Towards them, lumbering and rolling, dipping heavily into the shell-holes, heaving clumsily out of them, moving with a motion something between that of a half-sunken ship and a hamstrung toad, striped and banded and splashed from head to foot, or, if you prefer it, from fo'c's'l-head to cutwater, with splashes of lurid colour, came His Majesty's Land-ship 'Here We Are.'

'Gor-streuth!' ejaculated Ben. 'What—what is it?'

Ken only gasped.

'Ere,' said Ben hurriedly, 'let's gerrouut o' this. It's comin' over atop of us,' and he began to scramble clear.

But a light of understanding was dawning on Ken's face, and a wide grin growing on his lips. 'It's one of the Tanks,' he said, and giggled aloud as the 'Here We Are' dipped her nose and slid head first into a huge shell-crater, in ludicrous likeness to a squat bull-pup sitting back on its haunches and dragged into a hole; 'I've heard lots about 'em, but the seein' beats all the hearin' by whole streets,' and he and Ben laughed aloud together at the 'Here We Are's' face and gun-port eyes and bent-elbow driving gear appearing above the crater rim, in still more ridiculous resemblance to an amazed toad emerging from a rain-barrel. The creature lumbered past them, taking in its stride the narrow trench dug to link up the shell-holes, and the laughter on Ken's lips died to thoughtfully serious lines as his eye caught the glint of vicious-looking gun-muzzles peering from their ports.

'Haw-haw-haw!' guffawed Ben as the monster lurched drunkenly, checked and steadied itself with one foot poised over a deep hole, halted and backed away, and edged nervously round the rim of the hole. 'See them machine-guns pokin' out, Ken,' he continued delightedly. 'They won't 'arf pepper them Huns when they gets near enough.'

Fifty yards in the wake of the 'Here We Are' a line of men followed up until an officer halted them along the front line where Ben and Ken were posted.

'You blokes just takin' 'im out for an airin'?' Ben asked one of the new-comers. 'Oughtn't you to 'ave 'im on a leadin'-string?'

'Here We Are, Here We Are again,' chanted the other, and giggled spasmodically. 'An' ain't he just hot stuff? But wait till you see 'im get to work with his sprinklers.'

'Does 'e bite?' asked Ben, grinning joyously. 'Oughtn't you to 'ave 'is muzzle on?'

'Bite!' retorted another. 'He's a bloomin' Hun-eater. Jes' gulps 'em whole, coal-scuttle 'ats an' all.'

'He's a taed,' said another. 'A lollopin', flat-nosed, splay-fittit, ugly puddock, wi's hin' legs stuck oot whaur his front should be.'

'Look at 'im, oh look at 'im . . . he's alive, lad, nobbut alive' . . . 'Does every bloomin' thing but talk' . . . 'Skatin' he is now, skatin' on 'is off hind leg.'

'Is he goin' to waltz in and take that redoubt on his ownsum?' asked Ken. 'No,' someone told him, 'we give him ten minutes' start, and then follow on and pick up the pieces and the prisoners.'

They lay there laughing and joking, and watching the uncouth antics of the monster waddling across the shell-riddled ground, cheering when he appeared to trip and recover himself, cheering when he floundered sideways into a hole and crawled out again, cheering most wildly of all when he reached the barbed-wire entanglements, and waddled through, bursting them apart and trailing them in long tangles behind him, or trampling them calmly under his churning caterpillar wheel-bands. It was little wonder they cheered and less wonder they laughed. The 'Here We Are's' motions were so weirdly alive and life-like, so playfully ponderous, so massively ridiculous that she belonged by nature to nothing outside a Drury Lane panto. At one moment she looked exactly like a squat tug-boat in a heavy cross sea or an ugly tide-rip, lurching, dipping, rolling rail and rail, plunging wildly bows under, tossing her nose up and squatting again stern-rail deep, pitching and heaving and diving and staggering, but always pushing forward.

Next minute she was a monster out of 'Pre-Historic Peeps,' or a new patent fire-breathing dragon from the pages of a very Grimm Fairy Tale, nosing her way blindly over the Fairy Prince's pitfalls; next she was a big, broad-buttocked sow, nuzzling and rooting as she went; next she was a drunken man, reeling and staggering, rolling and falling, scrabbling and crawling; next she was—was anything on, or in, or underneath the earth, anything at all except a deadly, grim, purposeful, murdering product of modern war.

The infantry pushed out after her when she reached the barbed wire, and although they took little heed to keep cover—being much more concerned not to miss any of the grave and comic antics of their giant joke than to shelter from flying bullets—the line went on almost without casualties. 'Mighty few bullets about this time,' remarked Ken, who, with Ben, had moved out along with the others 'to see the fun.' 'That's 'cos they're too busy with the old Pepper-pots, an' the Pepper-pots is too busy wi' them, to leave much time for shootin' at us,' said Ben gaily. It was true too. The Pepper-pots—a second one had lumbered into sight from the centre of the horseshoe curve—were drawing a tearing hurricane of machine-gun bullets that beat and rattled on their armoured sides like hail on a window-pane. They waddled indifferently through the storm, and 'Here We Are,' crawling carefully across a trench, halted half-way over and sprinkled bullets up and down its length to port and starboard for a minute, hitched

herself over, steered straight for a fire-streaming machine-gun embrasure, squirted a jet of lead into the loophole, walked on, butted at the emplacement once or twice, got a grip of it under her upward-sloped caterpillar band, climbed jerkily till she stood reared up on end like a frightened colt, ground her driving-bands round and round, and—fell forward on her face, with a cloud of dust belching up and out from the collapsed dug-out. Then she crawled out of the wreckage, crunching over splintered beams and broken concrete, wheeled, and cruised casually down the length of a crooked trench, halting every now and then to spray bullets on any German who showed, or to hail a stream of them down the black entrance to a dug-out, straying aside to nose over any suspicious cranny, swinging round again to plod up the slope in search of more trenches.

The infantry followed up, cheering and laughing like children at a fair, rounding up batches of prisoners who crawled, white-faced and with scared eyes, from dug-out doors and trench corners, shouting jests and comments at the lumbering Pepper-pots.

A yell went up as the 'Here We Are,' edging along a trench, lurched suddenly, staggered, side-slipped, and half disappeared in a fog of dust. The infantry raced up and found her with her starboard driving-gear grinding and churning full power and speed of revolution above ground, and the whole port side and gear down somewhere in the depths of the collapsed trench, grating and squealing, and flinging out clods of earth as big as clothes-baskets. Then the engines eased, slowed, and stopped, and after a little, in answer to the encouraging yells of the men outside, a scuttle jerked open and a grimy figure crawled out.

'Blimey!' said Ben rapturously. 'Ere's Jonah 'isself. Ol' Pepper-pot's spewed 'im out.'

But 'Jonah' addressed himself pointedly and at some length to the laughing spectators, and they, urged by a stream of objurgation and invective, fell to work with trenching-tools, with spades retrieved from the trench, with bare hands and busy fingers, to break down the trench-side under 'Here We Are's' starboard driver, and pile it down into the trench and under the uplifted end of her port one. The second Pepper-pot cruised up, and brought to adjacent to the operations, with a watchful eye on the horizon. It was well she did, for suddenly a crowd of Germans, seeing or sensing that one of the monsters was out of action, swarmed out of cover on the crest and came storming down on the party. 'Here

We Are' could do nothing, but her sister ship could, and did, do quite a lot to those Germans. She sidled round so as to bring both bow guns and all her broadside to bear, and let loose a close-quarter tornado of bullets that cut the attackers to rags. The men who had ceased digging to grab their rifles had not time to fire a shot before the affair was over and 'Jonah' was again urging them to their spade-work. Then, when he thought the way ready, 'Here We Are,' at his orders, steamed ahead again, her lower port side scraping and jarring along the trench wall, her drivers biting and gripping at the soft ground. Jerkily, a foot at a time, she scuttled her way along the trench till she came to a sharp angle of it where a big shell-hole had broken down the wall. But just as her starboard driver was reaching out over the shell-hole and the easy job of plunging into it, gaining a level keel and climbing out the other side, the trench wall on the right gave way and the 'Here We Are' sank her starboard side level to and then below her port. She had fallen bodily into a German dug-out, but after a pause to regain her shaken breath—or her crew's—she began once more to revolve her drivers slowly, and to churn out behind them first a cloud of dust and clots of earth, then, as the starboard driver bit deeper into the dug-out, a mangled débris of clothing and trench-made furniture. On the ground above, the infantry stood shrieking laughter, while the frantic skipper raved unheard-of oaths and the 'Here We Are' pawed out and hoofed behind her, or caught on her driving bands and hoisted in turn into the naked light of day a splintered bedstead, a chewed-up blanket or two, separately and severally the legs, back, and seat of a red velvet arm-chair, a torn grey coat, and a forlorn and muddy pair of pink pyjama trousers tangled up in one officer's field boot. And when the drivers got their grip again and the 'HereWeAre' rolled majestically forward and up the further sloping side of the shell-crater and halted to take the skipper-aboard again, Ben dragged a long branch from the fascines in the trench débris, slid it up one leg and down the other of the pink pyjamas, tied the boot by its laces to the tip and jamb'd the root into a convenient crevice in the Tank's stern. And so beflagged she rolled her triumphant way up over the captured redoubt and down the other side, with the boot-tip bobbing and swaying and jerking at the end of her pink tail. And, as the story goes, when she came in time across the redoubt and bore down on the British line at the other extreme of the horseshoe, a certain infantry C.O., famed in past days

for a somewhat speedy and hectic career, glared in amazement at the apparition lurching and bobbing and bowing and crawling toad-like towards him.

'I knew,' he is reported to have afterwards admitted, 'I knew it couldn't be that I'd got 'em again. But in the old days I always had one infallible sign. Crimson rats and purple snakes I might get over; but if they had pink tails I knew I was in for it, certain. And I tell you it gave me quite a turn to see this blighter waddling up and wagging the old pink tail.'

So, the story having come in time to the ears of the skipper and mightily pleasing him and his crew, he swears he means to apply for, and in due and formal course obtain, permission to change his land-ship's name, and, having regretfully parted with the pink tail, immortalise it in the name 'H.M.L.S. The D.T.'s.'

'WHERE THE SNIPE DRUMS.'

THE actual shooting of a stalked or walked-up bird, except possibly of a grouse, on the high tops in a strong wind, can never give the same satisfaction as that of the same bird driven. And yet some of the most pleasantly remembered dates in our sporting calendars have been spent walking up our game. Looking back on these occasions, it is never the individual shot that we remember, but the work of some dog, the happy fact that we were 'on our day' and made a good average of cartridges to birds, or perhaps, and much more likely, it was the weather, the distant snowy hills, or the sight of some clear-running burn that has left its mark upon the memory.

Far be it from the writer to exalt mechanical proficiency with the gun into undue prominence. Few desire to become mere killing machines, and for such, at any rate, these notes are not written. But in recalling many days of pleasant effort, it has surprised the writer to realise how large a proportion belong to the impromptu-drive variety, when with three beaters and two guns, or more often with the beaters alone, one has attempted to outwit strange fowl—strange, that is, to the 'gun,' to whom a goose is a goose and a duck a duck even though the latter be a red-breasted merganser.

In looking back a scene at once presents itself. It is a wild day, if ever there was one, and even the estuary upon whose shores we stand is covered with waves, the heads of which are blown clean off by the gale. Above us rises a bank of sand-dunes, and anyone looking over this would discover a wide terrain of bents with here and there a pool. We are also within a quarter of a mile of the Atlantic Ocean, which just now is thundering on its strands. There are but two of us, myself and a ghillie, Dugald by name, a quiet man, prematurely white-haired in spite of the fact that his fortieth year is still nearly a lustrum ahead of him. We have been out for about an hour, and up to the present have but a single teal to show for it. The teal was one of some forty which rose from the shelter of a jutting bank beside the estuary; they have flown on until lost to sight behind the high bank of the dunes under which we stand.

'They'll be on one of them bit pools likely,' says Dugald. 'I

wadnae fire on the plovers or what-not till the teals is by. It'll tak' me twenty-thirty minutes to mak' ma circle and get on the ither side.'

Without more words he goes and I am left alone. First of all I select a spot where a kind of terrace beneath the dunes gives me a six-foot wall of sand in front. Over this I can look as from a high grouse-butt. In the immediate foreground I have a field of fire of about forty yards, beyond which the view is blocked by a large sandhill. On either side of this I can see further where in a dip of the dunes the west wind is driving the sand and roaring in the hollows.

About twenty-five yards to the left, and all unconscious of human proximity, five golden plover are standing. For a moment I hesitate, for, as may have been guessed, Dugald thinks little of plover and much of teal. I realise, however, that Dugald has gone up-wind in order to walk round by the beach, and the explosion of a 9-inch howitzer would hardly reach him against the wind, which seems to increase in violence with every moment. Goodness, how it blows! Sweet and strong sweeps the breath of the Storm Gods from the green islands of the Atlantic. The plover are facing up wind. I show myself and, as they rise, fire both barrels. Two fall to the first barrel, but none to the second, as they swerve. Then the three survivors turn and come straight over me down the wind. I have only time to shove in a single cartridge, and this I send somewhere well behind their tails in spite of all efforts to hold in front.

I reload and look round. The sound of the shots has stirred up the sheldrakes that must have been resting in a bay of the estuary. Their instinct is all for the open sea, so they fly by against the wind and within easy shot. I can see the beautiful markings of the cock very clearly, but I have not shot a sheldrake since I was a boy, and they pass unmolested. There is still a quarter of an hour or more to spare before Dugald will be able to begin the drive. Five minutes pass, during which I see nothing but several hoodie crows and a herring-gull. Then two wild ducks, both mallards, as I can see through the glasses, fly in and settle off the estuary. They are a couple of hundred yards away, but may swim this way.

Now another and most unwelcome figure enters upon the scene in the shape of an old seaweed-gatherer, who evidently intends to carry on his calling, which, if he stays in the estuary, will completely spoil all my chances. He may, however, be on his way to harvest the great piles of weed that the storm has torn from the

rocks, on the seashore itself. In the latter case he will do no harm. Slowly he comes up and I accost him.

'Where are ye for?' I bawl in the wind.

He touches his cap, but appears not to hear. He passes on with a tread as slow as Destiny, puts up the mallards, and finally disappears just as a score of curlew come over crying mournfully and well out of shot.

Dugald must have made his circle by now, I am sure, for though he is so far away I see some peewits rise, and then suddenly in a bunch, and travelling at express speed, the flock of teal. This time the golden plover have taught me a lesson, and I fire very far ahead indeed. Three little balls of feathers drop straight into the estuary and two more slant down upon its farther shore. To the best of my ability I picked my birds, the others flew into the shot circle. I send the dog into the water, and his efforts to find the teal, which are drifting fast, have to be aided by the throwing of a stone, an act which loses me a chance at two curlew. Then come two redshanks, wailing, and immediately after them a large flock of rock-pigeons, of which I get one. And now I can see Dugald's home-wove cap at the far end of the hollow. A snipe rises, flies straight at me with incredible speed, turns, and gives the easiest of chances as he balances for a moment against the tempest.

Then it is over and Dugald walks up. 'I heard ye shoot,' he says as he surveys the teal. 'They cam' over finely bunched,' he adds presently.

This is, of course, a successful drive—one of the best, indeed, of the scores I have tried at that place; many is the time that things have gone otherwise, and the birds either been absent or flown over the dunes two hundred yards wide. On one occasion when shooting in the half-lights, I remember a cormorant, diligently journeying over the promontory, came down to a gun who mistook his bulk for that of a greylag goose.

A bird that gives the highest class of sport when driven, and which one consequently wonders is not more often shot in this fashion, is the snipe. To drive snipe in the centre of a big bog is naturally a fairly hopeless business, but upon certain ground snipe can be driven with great and even consistent success. This method is more followed in foreign countries than in the British Isles, although, curiously enough, it has been introduced abroad by British sportsmen. Provided one can find a river with marshy banks, wherever the marshes are not more than a quarter to half-a-mile

in width, snipe-driving can be reduced to a reasonable certainty. No man can be certain or even guess in what direction snipe, when once flushed, will continue their flight, but their habit of circling causes a fair percentage to go over the guns, often very high. In a wind, there is no more difficult shooting.

Many beaters are not necessary for driving snipe unless they are lying very close indeed, since the best results are to be obtained by moving the snipe, rather than driving. Thus a single beater with two stops set two or three hundred yards away is more likely to persuade the snipe to fly in the desired direction than three beaters walking in line. Snipe, after flying forward for a hundred yards or so, are very apt to circle off at right angles. It is useless to attempt a long drive. Half a mile is quite enough, 600 yards, or even a quarter of a mile, better still, and indeed it is on birds rising within the last two hundred yards that the most execution is done. These birds often fly low, and some proportion of the shots are frequently at birds that do not rise more than three or four feet above the marsh. Nor are such shots easy, for it is quite a fallacy to think that snipe cease their zigzag flight as soon as some people seem to imagine. A high tussock, the crossing of water, a puff of wind are quite enough to cause snipe that have flown quite a long way to begin their dartings all over again.

One of the greatest difficulties, which is always present at a snipe-drive, is the position from which the shots must be taken. Good cover is an absolute necessity, and in order to obtain this, one is usually forced to hide in the reeds. The reeds are often low, and one often sinks into the mud to the knees or higher. As the shot must be taken in many cases from a sitting position, only about half the circle of fire can be covered by the gun, and the overhead shot is also rendered very difficult. Nothing is more annoying than to have the snipe all passing to the right when one cannot get into a shooting position for that side, owing to the fact that one has sunk well into the mire and cannot move one's feet.

As to cover, after October the reeds have been beaten down by the wind and rain, and a human being becomes a very obvious object in a snipe-bog. Therefore each gun should be provided with a light screen : a piece of green calico, four feet by three, attached at each side to a stick, will be found excellent. By thrusting the supporting sticks, which should be about six feet long, into the marsh, one can obtain a shelter, behind which one can move as much as the nature of the footing will allow. It would, of course, be

better still if permanent shelters of some kind could be built in the bog, but this is difficult, as they would rapidly subside.

Once the shelter has been successfully erected, a further need arises : as it is impossible to stand up behind so small a screen, one must therefore either sit or kneel. If a man can kneel, all is well, but he usually finishes soaked in December marsh water. At one shoot, the guns were provided with wicker stools upon which they sat, but the ground was phenomenally soft and the stools sometimes disappeared ; also the stools were slippery, and a high overhead shot often resulted in the gun measuring his length on his back in the mud and water.

I have never heard what the record may be for snipe-driving in Britain, but in Europe 252 birds fell in a day to five guns. I shot this carefully preserved ground in the following year, when unfortunately floods had spoiled our prospects, and our party got eighty odd snipe in half-a-day's shooting. Four of the eight drives we tried were against a very bright sun, so bright that it was necessary to wear blue glasses, and until you become well accustomed to them, glasses do not aid your marksmanship. The marshes upon which this shooting was done abut upon a river, and one gun—called for the drive the ' river gun '—took his stand in a punt under the bank. This gun, whoever he might be, usually made a good percentage of kills to cartridges, whereas the guns in the marsh never did much better than one in three or four—which perhaps was not so bad after all, when one considers that they were often sunk almost to the waist in mud and slime.

The state of the moon is of great importance to the snipe-driver, for if there is no moon the snipe will be busy feeding all day, and will, even after being disturbed, continually return during the course of the drive to their feeding-grounds. But after a moonlight night, they are very wild, and if disturbed will fly great distances. The wind is also important, for it is hopeless to try to drive snipe against a strong wind, and a great number will go away at right angles. The best chance is to drive snipe down-wind, which, if it be a good gale, blows them over the guns like leaves torn from a tree. The man who can kill one snipe in three under ordinary conditions in a fairly small day must be a shot of the highest class. I say 'a small day' advisedly, because if one is killing twenty odd snipe in a drive, it argues that there are plenty of birds, and consequently plenty of the easier kind of chance. But when the birds are few and far between, the gun is tempted to take

very high birds ; a snipe forty yards up is not out of range, though at forty yards he will, even if the shot be absolutely accurate, usually succeed in flying through the pattern. A snipe killed at extreme range falls with its wings outspread—parachutes down, in fact.

One of the worst difficulties in driving, and one which is insurmountable, occurs when the birds are in wisps. I have often seen wisps of fifty or sixty, and, on occasion, wisps of two hundred or more. If the snipe are thus packed, one cannot hope to do anything with them, and it is better to leave them for the day.

Snipe can be shot at flighting time, if the gunner knows where to go and does not object to a very large element of uncertainty. I can recall a bed of reeds in a loch into which the snipe continually dropped during the twilight hour. Fishing beside it one evening, I saw a score of snipe arrive. To anyone in the reeds they would have offered very easy shots, as they came in low and quite straight, paused a moment or checked in the air, as if deciding where to alight, and then dropped in like stones.

Another bird rarely driven except in an off-hand way, but which certainly is a splendid bird to outwit in this fashion, is the golden plover. In few places is he more abundant than in the lands that lie along the Northumbrian coast. Here, as elsewhere, when the snow is deep, he migrates to the tide-edge, where he falls a prey to the shore gunner, who creeps upon him under the shelter of the sea-wall and shoots at him sitting upon the shingle beside the water. At such times, however, the golden plover is so thin as not to be worth powder and shot. He is a very different bird upon the uplands and the wolds, where his rather sorrowful whistle fits in well with the desolate sky-lines, and with the stormy winds that make the grass so sweet.

There are certain fields that golden plover seem to love to the exclusion of others, certain spots which they always seek when any are in the neighbourhood, and if local knowledge can point out these places, continuous sport can be obtained, when the plover are in the country, by the shooter taking up his position under some hedge on the central line of flight and causing a companion or keeper to move the plover at their chosen resorts. Thirty or forty golden plover can be killed in this way in a day.

Stalking golden plover is excellent fun, but it has the disadvantage that the shot when obtained is usually into the flock and needs no skill whatever to bring off successfully.

I have read in many books that when golden plover fly over too high, a shot fired will often make them sweep earthwards. This is certainly true, but how often does the gunner gain anything by the horizontal dip? Golden plover shooting downwards in a curve are as difficult to hit as any birds that fly.

And how he captivates one's thoughts, this most soft-eyed of all birds, for the golden plover has a gentler eye than any of his kind, and nothing of the hard, darting glance common to almost all his cousins. Upon what strange scenes does he look in the short span of his life? He flies high over northern towns into cold mists bred about the Pole. There during the brief summer he struts in the splendour of his black-breasted breeding plumage beside meres in wastes unvisited by man. When the time comes for his southward move, he again proves himself a great traveller. His advance guards break their journey in Scandinavia and in our Isles, but his main battalions sweep on over the Giralda Tower and Seville to the marshes and vegas of Andalucian rivers. From there he makes his traverse of the narrow seas to Africa; thus the plover that was hatched in the Arctic waste in June may in November fly over the minarets of the sacred cities of the desert.

It is impossible to think of the golden plover without remembering his next of kin, the green plover. The two species are so often to be seen together, an alliance that is all in favour of the golden plover, since the peewit is the better sentinel and infinitely the more wary bird.

There are many who do not regard the green plover as a good bird for the table, and who, therefore, only shoot them upon occasion. Yet of the so-called 'golden plover' served in London restaurants and hotels, at least fifty per cent. are green plover. If the legs are left on the bird when it is served, it is easy to distinguish the two species as the number of toes differ, the golden plover having but three, while his green cousin boasts four. The French have a proverb to the effect that those who have not tasted the *vanneau* (green plover) do not know how good game can be to the palate. Certainly young green plover shot in August and September are as good as almost any bird, and they are without any question wary enough to make stalking them a high art.

The green plover frequently provides a fairly easy shot, though it is wonderful how often he is missed as he flaps over. But if proper advantage be taken of times and season, of ground and, above all, of weather, the peewit can be made to give shots as

difficult as any—indeed on occasion the most difficult of any bird without perhaps a single exception. This does not, of course, refer to the stalked peewit—in that sport the fun is purely the getting within range—nor to the ordinary driven bird, but to peewits as they abandon themselves to the wind and are literally blown over the guns.

You must picture an immense spread of dunes covered with little sandy hillocks and raved over by the winds of the Atlantic. Very sweet are the summer flowers on these dunes, and a scent that an islander would journey far to smell once more, redolent as it is to him of boyhood and long summer evenings. This range of dunes is a great haunt of green plover—flocks five hundred strong are to be seen for ever wheeling and settling; single birds beat slowly up against the west wind, and in the early darkness their mournful cry peoples the gloom.

There are always some particular areas of this great stretch of dunes that the plover favour. Sometimes these areas are a mile apart, sometimes but a few hundred yards. If the shooter, having discovered these areas, can place himself on a windy day between them and then crawl up fairly close to a flock, while his companion walks down wind upon them, the birds will often rise to a height of twenty yards or so and then suddenly abandon themselves to the force of the gale and, driven by its strength, pass over the head of the shooter with incredible speed.

One evening, just as it was growing dark, I happened, having returned from a long day's snipe-shooting, to be standing in the lee of a long barn, behind which a high wall running parallel to it divided the waste of dunes from the farm-lands and made a barrier some sixty or seventy yards in length. On the south side stands the lodge, and on that particular evening some herd-girls were driving in cattle on the open ground to the north. A stiff wind was blowing, and down the wind, flying low, then rising and topping the barn, came about three or four hundred green plover in little flocks or singly. As the birds topped the barn, they abandoned themselves to the force of the wind, and were whirled into the gathering darkness, giving the most difficult shots at short range that I have ever seen offered.

Great execution can be done upon peewits over decoys, which readily attract them. To anyone with sufficient local knowledge to forecast their lines of flight, their evening visits to the salttings can be made to yield good sport.

I rarely see green plover without calling to mind an episode that

occurred at a certain public school. In this episode a green plover played a prominent part. A youth of about fifteen, whom we will call Young Lower Fifth, was wont to pass as much as possible of his summer and winter holidays with a gun, lying out at night on the seashore and spending every shilling of his pocket-money on cartridges. On each return to school his sporting desires had to be curbed and held firmly in check. But it happened that one wild February brought thousands of plover to the ploughs that lie between the school and the sea. Twice a week the run, with which football was varied, passed through those fields, and in a moment of temptation Young Lower Fifth made up his mind to try his luck with the plover. This determination entailed the smuggling in of a walking-stick gun, which, disguised as an umbrella—for by the unwritten laws that may not be broken only the Sixth were privileged to carry sticks—he succeeded in bringing back after an 'up town' leave. For a moment he considered the bold course of leaving it in the umbrella-stand, but prudence led him to adopt a safer if less gallant course. Finally it reposed in a cunning excavation in the wall of his cubicle in the dormitory.

A half-holiday was, of course, the only suitable occasion on which the plan so happily initiated could be carried out. After a week of waiting, a hard frost set in, football was off, and a run to the sea prescribed for the House. Here, then, was the sportsman's chance! Complete secrecy was an absolute necessity—a whisper of his intention would have run like lightning through the school, and the hardihood and very unlikeness of the deed would have provoked enough comment to wreck a far less risky scheme. Thus Young Lower Fifth could take counsel with himself alone. The plover fields were some two miles out on the road to the sea, and the first step was to get the gun to some handy place. At the earliest opportunity Young Lower Fifth, having the gun ready hidden under his clothes, dashed out and cached it in the plantation beyond the football fields that bordered the same road.

The next problem was a question of time and speed. What with dinner and call-over, it was nearly two o'clock when he started. Usually a lazy youth, it was no surprise that he should bring up the tail end of the run, and the prefect, cursing him for his slowness, hurried on to tick off the first arrivals. Meanwhile Young Lower Fifth, discouraging any companionship, by those methods that serve schoolboys so well, but which we forget in later life, lagged behind, and by 3.30, having recovered his gun, was hurrying at

a very different pace on his back track. On his way home from the sea, he had noticed a fine flock of plover in a certain field beside the road, and towards this he set off with the highest hopes. When he reached it, the plover, glorious to relate, were still there, and he stalked them from behind one of the many stone dykes with which the country is seamed. He easily approached within forty yards of them and had a shot which, as his gun was a 410, somewhat naturally did not take effect! He crept on and during the best part of an hour had nine shots, all without result. He then realised that success depended on his achieving an approach within twenty yards, or even fifteen, and to this he set his mind. He had just spotted a flock in a good position, when a single plover suddenly flew over him from the west side of the road. It was quite close, and Lower Fifth threw up his gun and down came the bird. A moment later he had leaped over the wall and retrieved it, rejoicing.

It was a fine specimen, and would look well in the school museum, and there he told himself he would go and contemplate it, and it would be a 'good egg.' As he scrambled back into the road, his heart jumped horribly, for he heard a voice shouting 'Hi! hi! hi!' and was aware of a policeman coming over the hill at the double. He knew enough of the law to be conscious that no one was allowed to shoot within forty yards of the high road, and it was certain the policeman had seen the shot fired. Lower Fifth turned and fled. He could move fast enough when he wished to, and for the next quarter of a mile he made good time, but looking back over his shoulder, he was disagreeably aware that the distance between him and his pursuer was not increasing. Rather the contrary. He tried to put on a spurt. The twilight was now falling, and through the clear frosty air he could hear the heavy footsteps behind perceptibly gaining. At the beginning of the chase he had noticed that his enemy was wearing high boots, and he realised that a man who could make such good time in high boots must inevitably run him down at the last.

Lower Fifth's next move stands, I think, to the credit of his craft. At this point the road dipped and turned for a hundred yards or so, and here Lower Fifth knew he would be below the policeman's horizon. A little farther on the road crossed the railway by a bridge. As soon as the boy knew himself to be out of sight, he flung himself through the hedge and down the embankment, and ran along the line until he was hidden under the bridge.

As he crouched panting in the dark shadow, he was acutely

conscious of the possibilities of the situation, not, indeed, as concerned the law of the land—that of the school appeared a much more urgent matter. He had broken at least four School rules, and the face of the Head rose as a vision— At this moment a voice called out :

' Come ye oot fra' under the brig ! '

Lower Fifth did not budge, and the policeman plunged down to him, notebook in hand. To the demand for his name and address the boy made no answer, but a glance at his cuts and sweater told the man all he needed.

' Ye're frae the Collich. I'd better be taking ye back there ! '

Young Lower Fifth found his voice. ' Why ? '

' Ye've broken the law.'

' Yes, and what's the penalty ? '

' That's a ma'er for the magistrate.'

' What's the most they can fine me ? '

' Aboot forty shillings.'

' Well, I'll pay you that.'

' Ye'd daur to offer me a bribe ! '

' There's no bribe about it. You represent the law.'

' I do ! ' this grimly.

' But you don't represent the School. Look here— ' and then Lower Fifth explained the probable results.

The policeman listened, but his face did not relax. He was a hard man, and his profession had not softened him.

When the youth was finished, there was silence beneath the ' brig.' At last the policeman took out a piece of paper and wrote upon it.

' That's where I live,' said he. ' Bring ten shillings there by next Sa'erday and ye'll hear no more of yon shot. I'll tak' yon gun. Ye can have it when ye brings the ten shillings.'

' Thank you,' said Lower Fifth with real gratitude.

The hand that paid the money and redeemed the gun was a maternal one. The same hand on the same day took a carefully packed green plover to a bird-stuffer by request to act as agent on the strength of the following note :

' Please take it to H——. He'll do it for nothing, because he said he would when I gave him the third little ~~ank~~ I found dead on the beach last month. Tell him to get the eyes right, rather prominent and darker than he usually sticks in.'

H. H. P.

THE RELIEF.

BY MAJOR F. C. T. EWALD, D.S.O.

'Officers' valises will be stacked outside Battalion Head Quarters by 2.30 P.M. A and B Companies will march off at 5 P.M., C and D Companies at 5.30 P.M. Machine-guns will go with C and D Companies. O.C. Companies will report to C.O. by telephone when their relief is completed. Please initial.'

So run the simple orders brought to the captain by an orderly as he sits in his billet. He makes the entry in his notebook, initials the memo, as requested, and hands it back. The man salutes, and disappears to deliver his message to the other company commanders. It is a dreary day in January 1915, pouring with rain from heavy clouds overhead, a typical winter's day in Flanders. Here in the billet all is luxury, for it is dry—a little room in what was once a school, in that dim age known as 'before the war.' A priest probably occupied it, but no personal traces of the occupant are left, save three flower-pots on the window-sill, with geranium stumps still doing their best to grow. The room is small, about nine feet by twelve, with a table, of the kitchen variety, pushed hard up against the wall under a large window. Two wooden chairs and the usual small French stove complete the furniture. On the table are the remains of a meal, French bread, a black bottle which has contained wine, half a tin of butter, another of anchovy paste, a sumptuous cake, evidently from home, and an unopened tin of the inevitable plum jam. Piled up at the end of the table, to make room for the meal, is a heap of newspapers, and a small stack of letters that have been 'censored.' At the table sit two officers, who have just finished lunch, the company commander and his subaltern—these two are all that remain of the six officers who left England with the company in the early days of August 1914. Many times these two have faced death together, and many times they hope to face it together again, and so, being men and soldiers, they are united by ties that the civilian may never know.

'We shoved off at 5.30, my lad,' says the captain, 'and the

flea-bags have got to be outside the C.O.'s quarters at 2.30. Will you see about it ?'

The subaltern, aged twenty-three, replies with a vacant stare, ' Damn good pork chops those, skipper ; have a spot of rum to finish up ! Oh, sorry ; what did you say ? '

The skipper having repeated his injunction, adding that they have to take a machine-gun, the subaltern, whose mind seems principally to run on food, thinks that under the circumstances they had better have a ' spot ' of tea about a quarter to four, and proceeds to order it. To do this he raises his voice and shouts for someone called ' Painter.' The only reply is a voice coming from the little kitchen across the passage, singing :

' We beat you on the Marne,
And we beat you on the Aisne ;
We turned you back at Armentears
And here we are again.'

Again the subaltern calls for Mr. Painter, who replies with a shout of ' Sir ' that makes the captain wince. A figure clad in a pair of old field boots, khaki slacks, and an aged mufti shirt appears in the doorway. The subaltern explains the necessity for tea, and adds as an after-thought that the company is ' pushing off ' at 5.30, and that his own and the captain's gear is to go on the handcart, which will also have to take a ' Maxim ' gun. Mr. Painter, having superintended the same job many times, agrees to ' see to it,' and goes off to his kitchen singing something to the effect :

' That everybody but tramps
Have got to lick the stamps,
And stick them on the cards on Monday morning.'

The company sergeant-major then arrives, to confer with the captain, who offers him a cigarette and a drink. Captains become human these times, and the subaltern, finding himself totally ignored, proceeds, with the help of a large slice of cake, to finish censoring the letters.

As five-thirty approaches the two officers ' get dressed.' This consists of putting on wool mufflers, fleece-lined mackintoshes, belts carrying a revolver, field-glasses, and haversack. The rest

at 2.30. ant stare, f rum to that they and seems mstances our, and d shouts e coming s with a lad in a appears for tea, ing off' on the n. Mr. agrees hing to th the become totally o finish This toshes, e rest of the trappings supposed to be carried by the British officer will travel on the handcart, which handcart, bearing the name of an hotel, having been produced by Mr. Painter from nowhere in particular, together with a silver teapot, was said by that gentleman to have been 'left behind by the Fusiliers.' The cart and teapot having their uses no questions were asked, but I think the subaltern knew more about it. The pair have a last look round, to see that the servants have left the billet clean for the officers who will come in later when they have been relieved from the trenches, and that nothing has been left behind, and then emerge into the night. It is a filthy night, pouring with rain and black as a bag, and looming out of the blackness are the dim shapes of the buildings in which the men have been billeted. All is cold, wet, and miserable; a subdued sound of conversation comes from where the company has fallen in, and its whereabouts are made known by the points of light from the fags the men are still smoking. The subaltern goes to his platoon, the captain to the head of the company. Here he is met by the sergeant-major, who reports 'Company present, sir.' 'Thank you,' says the captain, 'and whom have we got in front ?'

'Fourteen Platoon, sir,' replies the sergeant-major; 'not their turn to lead, sir, but you said they were to be on the left, as it's Sergeant Barrow's platoon, and they will be the first to go in, sir.'

'All right; put out those cigarettes; lead on.' Sergeant Barrow's voice is heard, saying 'Put out them fags, can't you, No. 14 Platoon—at ease—quick march,' and the company shuffles off with the captain and the sergeant-major in front and the handcart, loaded about six feet high, bringing up the rear. Past the buildings, and through the huge gates, which are opened and closed by a weary-looking and rain-soaked sentry, splashes the company. Their way lies through a miserable street with wretched houses on either side, and still more wretched people looking out of the open doors. They are stunned by the horrors of the war, but the sound of moving troops rouses them from their apathy. Are these English soldiers going to a fight, are the Bosches about to advance, or is it only the usual relief going to the trenches? On go the soldiers in silence, the only sound being that of their boots on the *pavé*, and an almost whispered conversation carried on between the captain and the sergeant-major. On, past shell-holes in the road, and

past piles of stones thrown up where a 'coal-box' has burst in the *pavé*. The roofs of the houses are mostly intact, but here and there gaunt rafters are exposed in their nakedness against the sky, and tiles scattered about the road show where a shell has struck a house. The company turns to the right, on to the tram-lines; here, for some reason, except for one huge shell-hole in the middle of the road, no damage has been done, and by the dismal light in an *estaminet* a woman can be seen serving drinks. At length they halt by a ruined cottage at the junction of four cross-roads. Here, by the faint light of the moon, an irdescribable scene of waste and desolation meets the eye. The country is flat, flat as a board, and into the flatness, towards the trenches and the enemy, stretches a road, *pavé* and puddles glittering with wet. On either side is a ditch filled with water, and the adjoining fields, as far as the eye can see in the dim light, are sodden and waterlogged. Here and there are patches of sugar-beet and mangolds, and their leaves glisten no less than the intersecting ditches. The appalling flatness is broken only by a line of breastworks, at right angles to the road on either side and stretching out of sight; they are a second line of defence. In front of the breastwork is what might easily be mistaken for a brook, but it is only the original line of trenches, which had to be abandoned as useless when they filled with water, and so the breastworks were erected behind them. In the distance can be heard the low boom of guns, and the black horizon is pierced at frequent intervals by their faint flashes and by the bright lights of the German flares. Far away on the right the beam of an enemy searchlight swings in spasmodic jerks, then suddenly goes out. A damp, flat, nameless horror is on the land, evil to a degree; no living thing stirs.

'Halt! who goes there?' cries a voice. 'Friend,' answers another voice. 'Advance one and be recognised.' The first voice must have been satisfied, as out of the darkness come six wet and muddy figures, headed by someone obviously in authority. It is a sergeant-major of the Rifles, and he brings the guides from the company to be relieved. He goes up to our own sergeant-major, whom he seems to know, and says, 'Hello, George, nice cheerful spot; what price home soldiering after this gaft, tennis every afternoon two to four, what ho! serve,' and illustrates his remark by the action of a child about to hit a ball over a very low net; obviously he is no great performer. Sergeant-Major George Broom,

being in no mood for light badinage, turns to his captain and says 'This is Sergeant-Major Tidswell, of the Rifles, sir ; he has brought the guides.' 'Good evening, sergeant-major,' says the captain ; 'have you got any instructions, and how do you want us to go in ?' Handing over two leaves from a notebook the sergeant-major replies 'Yes, sir, the orders are there, and Captain Turner would like you to go in by platoons at a quarter of an hour's interval, left platoon to go in first, the Maxim to go with the last platoon, sir. I've got four guides and a guide for the gun. They'd better go down the road in file, sir, a rank each side and keep on the grass ; then if they do start to shell or turn on the searchlight they can hop in the ditch ; but I don't think they will be bothered, sir, it's pretty quiet.' 'Right,' says the captain ; 'pass the word for Mr. Wilson.' The subaltern, having cast his mackintosh, appears, dressed in a sheepskin coat and looking like a pan'omime dog, and touches his poacher's cap. 'You had better go along with 14 Platoon, see them in, then go to the company commander and say I shall come in with the last platoon ; get anything fixed up you can, and you had better take the servants with you. Get along.' As the skipper mentions the servants, Mr. Painter's voice is heard : 'Make way for a naval officer ; come on, the bold barrow-shovers.' The subaltern collects 14 Platoon, which takes a few minutes, as many of the men, having sat down, are asleep. He gets them on the road, and when satisfied that all are there says in a quiet voice, 'Into file—right turn. Quick march. A rank each side of the road, and don't make such a cursed noise.' The platoon, headed by the subaltern and the guide, goes off to the trenches three-quarters of a mile away. After a quarter of an hour, during which time the captain smokes a cigarette and chats to the sergeant-major, it is time for another platoon to move off. They fall in quietly on the road and a staid-looking sergeant reports to the captain that they too are 'all present.' The captain turns to the two sergeant-majors and, addressing his own, says, 'You two had better go in with this lot, and then you can take over the trench stores and have things cut and dried by the time I come along.' 'Very good, sir,' says the sergeant-major ; 'the platoon's all ready.' 'Right, then off you go,' and the second platoon slips away.

The third platoon follows in due course, and it is now the turn of the fourth and last platoon, with which goes the gun ; the platoon falls in, and, the handcart having returned from its first trip,

the gun and boxes containing belts are put on it, and the tail of the company is ready to move. The captain drops his cigarette-end, which splutters on the wet road, turns down the collar of his mackintosh and refastens the top button ; the rain has stopped for the time being. Turning to the men he says ' Same orders as to other platoons apply to you: stop smoking, no talking or noise, a rank each side of the road, and if anything happens hop in the ditch sharp, or you mayn't have time to hop.' The men get on either side of the road and shuffle along on the soaked grass, stumbling as they go. The captain walks in the middle, on the *pavé*, and the handcart with the Maxim comes bumping behind. Bullets fired by German snipers sing overhead, at least one always supposes they are overhead ; anyway they sing. But as they do no damage, and the men are perfectly used to them, nobody takes any notice. Suddenly, without the slightest warning, the blackness turns to a bright white light ; everything stands out clear and distinct. The branches of the leafless trees look black and sharp as in a fine etching ; the searchlight beacon is dead on them. The men halt of their own accord with a jerk, and stand motionless as if stricken by some unseen hand, as indeed they are. There they stand, every man showing clear and distinct, and the faces ghastly pale in the bright unnatural light. ' Not a move,' says the captain, for they are still some distance from the trenches, and even if the enemy can see this far it is probable that if they stand still they will be unnoticed. The searchlight has caught the little party on the hop—badly on the hop. Instead of splitting the darkness on one flank or the other and slowly swinging towards them, and so giving the men time to drop into the ditch, in that one brief instant the light flashed out full on them in all its brilliant brightness. And there they stand like statues, staring into that huge, unwinking, and glaring eye, feeling as pygmies might, discovered by some dread evil spirit. There they stand, frozen, staring, and ever staring for a period of unmeasurable time, waiting for a shell. Slowly, slowly this evil thing shifts, and the beam swings away to the right, searching the wet flatness of the night.

With a vast sigh of relief the platoon moves on, and the incident is forgotten. The trek is continued down the road, and at a battered and broken building, once a prosperous farm, they turn to the right, parting company with the gun, which goes on, and in single file move along a farm track ankle-deep in mud. Soon

the guide says to the captain, in a low voice, ' Better 'alt 'ere, sir, and I'll go on and see if they are ready for yer,' and, without waiting for anything further, disappears. The captain, who had intended to go on with the guide, had he given him the chance, stops the men behind him by putting up his hand. They stand silent and squelch their feet in the wet clay, for the enemy trenches are but two hundred yards off. Near at hand is a dead cow, its stiffened legs pointing to the sky, and with its swollen body looking for all the world like a drawing in a comic paper. But it makes its presence felt, and a muffled voice is heard, ' What ho, Ginger, what price melons ? ' at which terrific jest the men can hardly contain themselves. The sound of the guide returning through the mud is heard, and he conveys a message to the captain that all is ready in the trenches. ' All right, go ahead,' whispers the captain ; the guide leads on, followed by the officer, and the men without any word of command come along in rear.

The line of trench can now be faintly seen, and a glow here and there denotes a coke-bucket which has been stoked up for the benefit of the incoming company. ' Here you are, sir, this way,' says the guide, pointing at nothing, but the captain had been there before, and, with the help of a long pole he carries, slips and slides through a gap in the parados into the almost knee-deep water in the bottom of the trench. This trench is not the fire trench, but one running parallel to it and about five yards in rear. It is connected at frequent intervals with the fire trench, and is used by messengers, officers, &c. to get from one part of the line to another without having to go through the slow process of pushing past the men in the fire trench. Also the dug-outs of the company commander, sergeant-major, orderlies, and telephone operators are here. The captain having no part in putting in the platoon he arrived with, and knowing his way from a previous tour, goes off towards the company commander's dug-out. The trench is narrow, deep, and very wet, and now and then he stumbles over a sodden mass of clay that has fallen from the sides in a huge flake. Ever slipping and stumbling, he keeps himself upright with the help of his pole and by pressing his elbows into either side of the trench, and in a few strides is covered with wet and sticky mud. At last he reaches a part where the wet trench walls reflect the glow of a light ; his journey is ended, he has

reached the 'captain's bug hutch.' He turns sharp to his right and, stooping his head, enters. The dug-out is square, about six feet by six, and five feet high, uncomfortable to stand in, but with plenty of room to sit. A lot of trouble must have been taken in the 'dry days,' as in a little raised recess, well off the floor, stands a fire-bucket full of glowing coke and charcoal, giving out a real heat, and a chimney has even been made from biscuit tins. Above the fireplace is a shelf cut out of the mud, rather like an elbow-rest, and this they call the mantelpiece. It is decorated with some half-dozen Christmas cards and a looking-glass. A small, oblong, wooden table takes up most of the floor space, and appears very low, as its legs have sunk into the mud. There are two dilapidated cane-bottomed chairs, and a piece of sacking does duty for a door. The roof, made of timber, corrugated iron, and sods, keeps out the rain ; it is not shell-proof and probably not altogether splinter-proof, but it gives a sense of security anyway, a thing well worth having. The clay walls are soaking wet, and the floor is well awash ; in a bottle on the table stands a lighted candle. The captain of the Rifles is sitting on a chair, unwashed and with a four-days' growth of beard, happy at the thought of a billet to-night, but a trifle nettled at the delay of his relief. He is plastered from head to foot in Flanders clay, and lights a cigarette with perfectly filthy hands ; the only sign of civilisation about him is a single eye-glass, which he wears without a string.

'Hullo,' says our captain, 'afraid I am a bit late, but we got hung up by their infernal searchlight.' 'That's all right,' replies the rifleman ; 'your sergeant-major is taking over the trench stores and ammunition from mine, and the rest of the traps are on the table. There are two periscopes and two flare pistols, and fourteen rounds of ammunition for them, and here is a map of the trenches ; I think you made it yourself when you were in here before, didn't you ? There is a bed of leeks we've found at the back, and my servant will tell yours where he got some potatoes, and there's a little coal in that sack that we found at the water farm. It's all been pretty quiet, and the Huns haven't bothered us much, bar the usual sniping. They put a few "Willies" over yesterday, but didn't do any harm, and most nights they try their Maxim against the water farm and the water party have got to watch it a bit. I have had a lot more wire put out, the knife-rest kind, and I think it's pretty right now, but that you'll see for yourself. A working

party has been down most nights getting up that breastwork at the back, and I think that's all.'

The two sergeant-majors enter, and one says to his captain, 'I've checked the trench stores and ammunition, sir, and they are correct ; here's the receipt for you to sign, sir ; the relief's all done and the Rifles have gone out, sir.'

'Then I may as well get along,' says the Rifle captain, 'if you are satisfied.'

'Right ho ; I'm sure everything is all right.'

'Then come on, sergeant-major, we'll get off ; good night and good luck to you ; good night, sergeant-major.' 'Good night, Turner.' 'Good night, sir,' from our sergeant-major. Even in the trenches the British Army is polite. Then says the sergeant-major to his captain, 'I had better let the company stand down, sir, and the night sentries go on.'

Ten minutes later the Colonel, sitting in his dug-out back in the communication trench, receives the following telephone message : 'D Company relief completed.'

*YOUTH IN THE WAR*¹

NOT long ago I dreamed that I was before a Tribunal which was to decide my liability for military service. In my dream I was nearly fifty years old; and it had been internationally agreed that in the interests of the human race all men between forty and sixty should be called up before the younger men. The Tribunal, composed of impartial persons between twenty and forty, was on the whole very polite and judicial, except in certain cases of fire-eating editors and newspaper proprietors, who were not found as indispensable to the State in their professional capacities as they imagined. I do not think that I ever grasped who were our enemies in the dream-war; but with the curious forgetfulness of a dreamer I saw sitting on the Tribunal three friends of mine—Rupert Brooke, his younger brother Alfred, and Frederic Hillersdon Keeling. They had all developed along the lines I had expected. Rupert was Professor of English Literature at Cambridge, Alfred a pillar of City finance, and Ben Keeling (as his friends called him) head of a Sociological Research Department.

I woke up before my own case came on and wondered why these three particular friends should have been associated in my dream. I think it was because they were all so temperamentally opposed to ideals connected with war or any other form of cruelty. In their Cambridge days, when I first knew them, they would have fought conscription to the last ditch. To Rupert Brooke and Keeling Germany was a less foreign country than France. Yet they all went straight into the army in August 1914, with more alacrity than some of those who disdain pacific ideals. So typical were they of many others who have died, and encountered even worse disasters such as blindness and loss of reason, in the war that some personal impressions of them may perhaps be of general interest.

Rupert Brooke always appeared singularly unruffled by any events, political or otherwise, in his almost Shelleyan existence at Grantchester. I see him tugging my little boat up the sunny shallows of the Cam in a flannel shirt and shorts to a place just

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above Byron's Pool, where we bathed with his friends. His talk was simple, detached, and ironical. I remarked to him one day how distressed any poet of the late nineties would have been by a pane of yellow glass in a door that opened on to the Vicarage lawn, and he said how much he enjoyed the charming illusion of sunshine it gave him on a wet day. In the early summer of 1914, when he was just back from his travels, he seemed more personally interested in the world ; but his most salient characteristic before the war was always a marked gentleness of soul. I could not imagine him involved in any quarrel, and his indignation after seeing the agonised evacuation of Antwerp was only a logical development of his own ideals. Though always in pursuit of realities he had never before been face to face with cruelty on a large scale. He himself describes the almost tidal conflict in his own mind, and all the queer muddle of English and German memories, when the war broke out, in one of his best essays, which has even now acquired an historical value.

Alfred Brooke, who was killed while asleep in a dug-out by a high explosive on June 14, 1915, was perhaps even more to his friends than his brother ; for he was by temperament more intimate and less elusive. But I knew him better than Rupert and may be wrong as to this. La Bruyère has remarked that there are some whose glory it is to write and others whose glory it is not to write. It was Alfred's glory to *talk* in his own mellow, humorous, imitable manner, and to make others talk also. He was (I must imagine) the most charming host, guest, and travelling companion of his generation. He was the ideal embodiment of all that is conveyed by the old motto 'Sodalitas, Convivium.' He was myriad-minded in his interests ; but modern finance appealed to his imagination, and he threw in his lot with it till the war made havoc of finance and financiers. He then promptly devoted himself to a life which, apart from the purpose of trying to end the offensive chaos, was for him singularly tedious and boring. Volumes of Gibbon and piles of the 'New Statesman' and the 'New Witness' followed him up to his last dug-out. To the very end his courage was no less conspicuous than his frank disgust with the brutalities of war and the horrors of walking through trenches over masses of German dead. He was firmly convinced that if the Kaiser and his General Staff had ever had to fight in the trenches themselves the 'mailed fist' would never have materialised. He was a Liberal stalwart who would have fought conscription

in England, tooth and nail ; though under any intelligent system of conscription either he or his brother would probably have been employed in a less hazardous department of the War Machine. He has at least escaped seeing the destruction of the amiable if unsophisticated Liberalism that he so ardently supported. But for those who loved him he leaves a drab world.

Of quite a different type was Sergeant F. H. Keeling. The Brookes were of King's ; Keeling was of Trinity. Keeling was an impetuous and vociferous reformer of the Fabian School. In his chambers at Lincoln's Inn blue-books littered his capacious table and even his floor and his bed. The social progressiveness of the whole modern world blew like a gale through these otherwise 'dusty purlieus of the law.'

For anyone who like myself associated Fabian ideals with a certain inhumanity of regimentation and an abstract unreality in logically and practically developing notions which were plausible only on paper, to know Keeling was a valuable education. He loved human beings almost *en masse*, and his affection knew no distinction or limitation. His friends were of all ranks and ages. His elderly bedmaker at Cambridge, his artisan cronies, his Civil Service colleagues, and nearly all the men and women he came across were all alike charmed by his disinterested enthusiasm for reforms of all kinds. He would give endless time and trouble to putting right some case of individual distress or hardship ; he was never content, as most reformers are, to note the case for future use in propaganda. His head was as open as his heart ; he was never satisfied with his own notions of things. ' Give us this day our daily idea and forgive us what we thought yesterday ' might have been his prayer had he been in the habit of praying, which he was not. Pomposity and the cold dignity of the aspiring prophet were not in his composition. The vocabulary with which before the war he championed the ideals of Nonconformity, Puritanism, and Prohibition would have speedily cleared any conventicle or assembly-room of Nonconformists, Puritans, or Prohibitionists. The war, indeed, so far changed his ideas that in one of his last letters he wrote to me that ' if there were a Valhalla ' he would ' sample the best brews for my benefit ' in anticipation of my advent. In another letter from a hospital at the front he mentioned that even an unreformed world could seem very sweet on a fine day.

Others have written of his military life, which he keenly enjoyed. True to his convictions of civic equality he enlisted as a private,

and refused all offers of a commission, though he could not avoid being made a sergeant. He threw all his marvellous energy and enthusiasm into the war and will (I imagine) never be forgotten either by officers or men. Like Rupert and Alfred Brooke, Raymond Asquith, and so many others, he went to his death as though he heard the undying words of Aeschylus were calling him :

‘Ελευθεροῦτε πατρίδ', ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ
παιᾶς, γυναῖκας, θεῶν τε πατρῷων ἔδη,
θήκας τε προγόνων ὑῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγών.'

To some survivors, perhaps, the honour and glory of death in action is some consolation. For me, and probably to many others, the whole tragedy is unrelieved by the thought that the shoddy vainglory of two diseased Emperors and the folly or criminality of their subjects should have bled Europe of her best lives. The sense of loss to England in the death of all these young men must surely obliterate all the old romantic nonsense about war for several decades at least. But the criminal vanity of a dynasty like the Hohenzollerns and all the poisonous brood of ideas developed to minister to that vanity will not be easily exterminated. It may soon rise again from its ashes if we allow ourselves to relapse into a mood of sentimental acquiescence in accomplished facts and console ourselves too easily with reflections on the honour and glory of the dead. ‘Who dies if England lives?’ like most rhetorical questions, invites no answer. But one may well ask what sort of England would survive if wars on the present scale occurred in each decade. Certainly not the England that produced Chaucer’s Knight :

‘ And though that he was worthy he was wise,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vilanie ne sayde
In alle his lif, unto no manere wight,
He was a veray parfit gentil knight.’

E. S. P. HAYNES.

THE FLYING LEAVE.

IT was upon the last day of his flying leave that Captain John Falconer suddenly realised that he wholly loathed the bare idea of returning to the trenches.

The blow fell unsoftened by a pang of prescient warning. Fresh from the great spade war, he had enjoyed every moment of his holiday by reason of the incisive contrast. The train that bore him from one adjacent country into another had magical qualities, for it passed the boundary of the fifth dimension and whirled him into a new world, while the other blew out in a puff of smoke and a last crackling roar of artillery. At Victoria Station, he stepped from night into day.

Lying back in his lounge-chair and fortified by a good dinner, he gazed around the drawing-room with his newly stimulated appreciation. The sense of security, the absence of noise, the comforts of home—each contributed to his all-pervading happiness. It was good to look at familiar faces after daily lightning glances at the great scarred countenance of General Death. There was a smile upon his lips as he turned to answer a girl's question.

‘When are you going back to the trenches?’

‘I'm due back to-morrow.’

He paused to admire once more the somewhat unusual beauty of the girl. With flaming hair, the colour of an autumn leaf, and amber eyes, she exacted a toll of fugitive glances, by reason of her vital brilliancy.

Hitherto, Falconer had paid homage to no woman—only answering the call of one—mighty and mail-clad—who stood waist-deep in the green-white circlet of her seas. But while he now paid tribute to Yvonne Parmiter's charm, he could not avoid wonder as to the source of the intermittent trouble that clouded the clarity of her eyes.

She echoed his word.

‘To-morrow? So soon? Will you—mind?’

Those around looked at him: the women with admiration, the men with some envy. The perfect physical fitness that was the heritage of his personal hardships, marked him as one apart—one who was living, in reality, and sowing a rich harvest of experience and memory.

'Mind!' He laughed. 'Rather not! It's a grand life, I wouldn't miss it for worlds. Indeed, we all of us pity those who stay at home.'

Every word was uttered in honest faith.

'But the change,' the girl persisted. 'It is so impossible to realise.' She furrowed her brow in an effort to capture the idea. 'To-night, you are *here*. We are here. And to-morrow, we shall all go out, just like the flame of a candle, and you'll be *there*. To-morrow, the trenches will be the reality. Home will be only the dream.'

Falconer nodded.

'That's so.'

His lips moved stiffly. It was at that moment that he fell into hell—to find, like many another of his comrades, that it was but a few spadefuls deep.

Suddenly he visualised it, with merciless clarity. Mud. There was nothing but mud—earth and water still writhing—mingling and separating—in the giant throes of creation. Again he crawled over it upon hands and knees until he was cased inside a pitch plaster. He sank thigh-deep and felt his boots plucked off by the suction of its foul noisome lips. He had helped to dig out its victims, buried to their waists and shoulders. He thought of his last dug-out, where a spring rose nightly, like a vile caricature of Undine, turning his straw bedding to oozing filth. He recalled snapshot nightmare patches of slumber, when the air seemed to materialise to black honey, and he fought with fear of suffocation. A mean, foul, muddy hell—such as made its victims yearn—Tomlinson-wise—for the clear red pit-coal fires of tradition.

Yet for months Falconer had dwelt therein, finding the life good, upon the whole, and meeting hardships with fortitude and optimism. It was true that he went to the war animated with that nervousness that is not incompatible with courage and had felt the heroic thrill of the conquest of fear. His name had been mentioned in a dispatch.

Yet he had been spared the reaction that is the inevitable aftermath of overstrained nerves. While his comrades, in rotation, had collapsed under exhaustive nerve-drainage, he had been invulnerable. The enemy had reserved him for a long-range target, striking at him in the midst of his enjoyment of the security of home.

A clod of mud had found its billet in his brain.

The mellow chimes of a clock aroused him from his reverie. It was a sinister reminder of the passing of the flying leave. To-morrow, he was due back in hell.

He gazed round the room with brooding eyes, marking the signs of external comfort, which, by comparison with his muddy trench, seemed transmuted to luxury—the pile of the carpet, the delicate hue of the hangings—the glint of many an ornament gleaming under the rose-shaded electric globes. He stared at the dainty gowns of the women—the indifferent faces of the men.

In a gust of anger, he hated them all. He was a damned soul who had just heard the recalling whistle of his overseer. There were but three prime factors of existence—to be warm, clean, and safe. These care-free, over-washed men and women were spending their energies in the pursuit of trifles, blindly unconscious of their possession of the fundamental essentials. And to keep the roof whole above their heads—and others of their kind—he must go back to rot in that slimy pestilential foulness.

It was not fair. His madness waxed, inflamed by the bitter sense of injustice of the labourer who has borne the heat and burden of the day. He had spent a couple of days of his flying leave in London, and while there, had thrilled with the stimulating sense of acquitted duty. Upheld by conscious rectitude, he had faced pertinent questions posed by recruiting-posters; lying back in his stall, at places of amusement, he had listened, outwardly stolid of demeanour, but inwardly elated, while he was vocally thanked from the stage.

He had done his share. Let one of these others take his place for awhile!

‘ Halloa, Falconer ! Your leave’s running rather dry.’

Falconer looked up at the man who had addressed him with feelings of unconcealed aversion. Charteris was a lawyer of some distinction, with an undertow of sinister repute that avoided the reproach of open scandal. The soldier instinctively distrusted the sagging lines of his tired face—plain traces of the collapse of misspent power. He hated even to see him in the proximity of Yvonne Parmiter, although Charteris was for many years married. Moreover, he had known too many women and held them light.

‘ How d’you feel ? ’ Charteris gave his habitual croaking laugh. ‘ Rather like a schoolboy at the end of the holidays ? ’

From sheer force of habit, Falconer dissented.

‘ Not much ! I couldn’t stick the life here now. Besides, I

never cared a rap for going back to school. Except'—he added in a different voice—'once.'

'Ah?'

The question was perfunctory; but, seized with a sudden need for self-expression, Falconer caught at the opportunity. He craved the relief of utterance. For a few minutes, at least, he would escape the strain of pretence, and in re-living the minor pangs of his boyish tragedy, he could re-live the major tragedy of to-day.

He began to speak rapidly.

'It was this way. I thought it was going to be my last term, and, in my youthful exuberance, I took my toll of last grudges on the place. I forget exactly what I did, and when I heard that, after all, I was to go back, I magnified the thought of my mischief into crime. The fear of its consequences poisoned my whole holiday. I brooded over it, day and night. I dreaded going back—I positively *dreaded* it.'

The note of actuality in his voice was arresting. His account of the charge in which he had won recognition had been terse as a telegraphic dispatch. Yet now, he was plainly in the grip of a real agony.

'Nonsense!' It was Charteris who objected. 'The average boy isn't a nerve-centre. Probably, you had five bad minutes of funk just as your train came in.'

'No.' Falconer's voice was sharp. 'I was—in *those* days—highly strung as a hare, for ever on the hop. I tell you, I used to make pictures in my mind of my return. I can see them now.'

Instead—he saw mud—a desolation of sodden flats intersected with interminable trenches, where rain-drilled pools reflected a leaden shell-stabbed heaven.

He tightened his mouth to hide the involuntary quiver of his lips.

'The last day came. My time was up, even as now. I was standing, just as we are now, in this drawing-room, watching the trains. An express shot by, and suddenly, my whole brain caught on fire. I saw my future written in one word, *Escape*.'

'Ah!' Charteris awoke to interest. 'The wonder is that you never thought of it before. In every *impasse* there is always the way out.'

The heaviness of his features broke into mobility as his eyes sought, for a second, the downcast face of Yvonne.

'Kipling was right,' he went on, 'when he wrote of the magical

the locomotive. "Unseen, romance brought up the 9.15." Hulloa ! There goes the Folkestone boat-express.'

With a long-drawn shriek, a golden streak, luminous and explosive, tore across the darkness.

Charteris laughed at Falconer's involuntary start.

'Remind you of a Jack Johnson ?'

'Not the least resemblance.' Falconer laughed. 'But, seeing that train, brings it all back again. I remembered a maiden aunt, a foolish soul, devoted to me, who lived in a creeper-bound house, absolutely buried in a Devonshire combe. My refuge. I thought of no side-issues. I just fixed my thoughts on her. And that express seemed to me like a bridge from me to her.'

'Go on !'

Charteris's unwonted interest was sustained.

'It was then, or never. That very night, in fact. . . . By the way, has it ever struck you that this is an unusually easy house to escape from, as there are practically no alternatives ? You could not undo all the bars and bolts of the big entrance without waking up the stone Crusaders in the church yonder, and the back regions are always infested with crowds of yelping dogs. There only remains the small side-door. Have you ever noticed it, Miss Parmiter ?'

'Yes. At least—I think so.'

'Everything depended on whether that door would be left open—that is, whether that key would be left in the lock. Nine times in ten, it is. The chances were all in my favour. But occasionally the Governor, in an unusual fit of fussiness, for some occult reason, pockets the key.'

'I waited until the house grew quiet, until the very last inmate had gone to bed. One by one, I accounted for them ; listening for their footsteps and verifying them safe within bounds by the slam of their doors. After all my vision of travel in a lightning express, the only train that stopped was the 4.15, due at the Junction, forty minutes away.'

'I packed my bag, and waited. Presently, the last sound in the house died away. Then silence. And then the house woke up and began to talk. You know those myriad noises that make you strain your ears, for you know that you are just upon the point of distinguishing words that never come ?'

'I know.' It was Yvonne who spoke. In the pallor of her face her eyes shone with yellow-brown lustre. 'You wait, and

listen in the darkness, and all the time, all around you, that great Whisper.'

Falconer nodded.

'Presently—the time to start. I opened the door and crept down the passage, fearing every step, lest a creaking plank should betray me. I reached the staircase and peered into the black well of the hall. I could only just distinguish the door. . . .

'Would it be open? I asked myself the question a hundred times as I crept down the stairs, but I had no real anxiety. I knew that it would be open. There was no reason to doubt. I firmly believed in my luck. All the same, when I reached it, my hands trembled so violently that I could hardly try the latch.

'And . . . I found it locked.'

He breathed heavily, again savouring the accumulated disappointment of the years. His last hope gone. His flying leave at an end. And ahead—mud! Wastes of churned-up mud!

'What happened afterwards?' Yvonne had also caught her breath.

Falconer laughed.

'Oddly enough, I really forgot. Of course, I went back. And I am fairly positive that nothing was half so bad as I expected. It never is.'

The clod of mud in his brain stirred, momentarily threatened by the solvent of returning sanity.

He held out his hand.

'And now, I must wish you all "Good-bye." I must get a long night. I shall be off before you're up to-morrow.'

He formed an heroic central figure in that cheery drama of farewell, a counterpart in living bronze to his forebears, those stone Crusaders at rest.

Half an hour later, he was alone in his own room, prowling around it, restlessly fingering the ornaments and staring at the pictures, unable to control his movements. Although the radiator was turned on, he lit the gas-fire and held out his hands to the ruddy glow of the asbestos. He pressed another switch and flooded the room with extra light. He wanted heat and brightness to excess. To-morrow he would be back in a deliquescent trench.

The thought was unbearable.

Presently, he turned off the lights again, and, opening his window, looked out into the night. It lay below him, earth-scented, faintly luminous and thrilling with the last vibrations of the world's

many voices—thready echoes from tropical bazaar and filmy splashing of polar seas mingling in an English garden.

Filled with a passionate yearning for its peace and beauty, he drew a long breath. He could not leave his country.

Involuntarily, he thought of another spot that he loved. A northern vale, remote and rarely visited, where the silvery ribbons of foaming streams fell sheer down the green and purple hills and the brown surface of the tarn reflected the trees in pellucid sepia. Dry ling underfoot, silence unbroken save by nature's orchestration. Fur, fin, and feather and the rough comfort of the primitive inn. In one word—sanctuary.

As he watched, a whistling scream awoke every slumbering Dryad in her tree. With a rattle of metal and a pall of fire-sprayed smoke, the express shot by in a roar of thunder.

The sight fired the torch in Falconer's brain.

In that second, he captured the elusive fragment of thought that had evaded him in the drawing-room.

A parallel. At last, he saw everything clearly, reading the cryptic script of the 'Book of Destiny.' From the beginning, this minute had been foreseen. His boyish flight was no childish freak, but a carefully planned trial essay—preparation for the real performance. In every detail, the parallel was perfect.

He would escape.

But, this time, the door would be open.

A tempestuous storm of exhilaration rushed through him, wrecking all proportions into chaotic ruin. Side-issues were non-existent, the far future a blank. Yet, moved by some blurred scruple, he snatched at a writing-pad and scrawled a few lines.

'I am leaving earlier than we planned so as to save the mater another good-bye. Thought it best. Don't worry about me; am feeling splendidly fit after my good time here, but am anxious to be back again.'

He laughed as he wrote.

Slowly the night wore on, and, in its passage, proved the truth of the saying that the future is but the past entered by another door.

It seemed to Falconer that every detail of his early escapade was duplicated. He waited, with the same strained eagerness, for the household to answer to his call-over. He heard his father's heavy stump and the outburst of simulated high spirits under which

he concealed his real feelings. Falconer was touched by the noisy laughter and pointless jest; the poor old governor was taking it hard. He felt, too, how his mother paused perceptibly by his door, fingering the handle as though she would fain turn it.

To keep the old childish lump from arising in his throat, he began to pack his bag, whistling softly the while. He did not know that the tune was not the inevitable 'Tipperary,' but 'Forty Years On.'

Presently, his preparations were made, and he took up the timetable that hung from a nail in the wall. Even in that remote spot, train services were mutable.

Yet, upon the whole, he was not surprised to read that, even after the lapse of years, the only train that stopped at the Junction was timed for 4.15.

The faithfulness of the repetition was even more forcible as the hours wore on. The interminable vigil, when he fretted against the strain of inaction—when every second was a slice of hell sandwiched between each clock-tick. And then the noises of the night, rising one after the other, to merge into the general under-chorus. Here and there, he traced back one to its source: the distant hoot of an owl, the patter of a mouse, the squeak of a bat, the snapping of a board.

One voice was silent—the trumpet-call of her who stood amidst the foaming seas, her mighty heart giving back an answering throb to every wave that buffeted her sides.

That voice he heard no longer.

Slowly, the hands of his watch crawled on until they reached the hour of his start. He threw a last farewell look around his room, then opening the door, stole, with beating heart, into the corridor. As he cautiously felt his way in the darkness, the warrior of a campaign shrank down to the little frightened schoolboy of so many years ago.

Every board seemed to snap underneath his weight in just the same startling manner; the handle of every door turned audibly as he passed by; unseen people stalked him down the length of the passage. When he reached the landing and looked down into the gulf of blackness below, the familiarity of the scene gave birth to a tremour of apprehension.

The parallel was growing too perfect. What if it persisted in following in the lines of the abortive experiment right up to its conclusion?

Last time, the door had been locked.

The suggestion was appalling. The whole concentrated dread of return fell upon him, engulfing him, paralysing every faculty. With the ineffective strength of a sleep-bound dreamer, he struggled vehemently to break free. At any cost, he must escape. Never before had the Flemish mud choked so vilely—never was the northern valley so dear and so remote.

He scarcely knew how he descended the staircase. It seemed to him that something vital within him had dragged forwards the leaden limbs of a dead man. He reached the bottom and there stood awhile, straining his vision to the utmost.

As his eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, he saw, against the darkness of the walls, a lighter patch, with the tracery of naked boughs outlined against a star-spangled sky.

At last the drama had freed itself from the spell of the past and had boldly broken into a new and startling development.

The door was already open.

Scarcely able to credit his good fortune, he stared at it. It seemed to symbolise his success—to show that the gods of chance had breathed their benison upon his flight.

But while his thanksgiving was still a breath fluttering upon his lips, he shrank into the shadow, at the sound of a footstep without.

The patch of sky was eclipsed by the bulk of a heavily coated man's form. A whisper, audible by reason of its very force, reached his ears.

'Why haven't you come? The car's in the lane. I've been waiting.'

Charteris's voice was easy of recognition. It was instinct, however, that told Falconer the name of the second shadow that materialised from the darkness.

'I—I couldn't make up my mind.'

From the quiver in her voice, Falconer felt that Yvonne's indecision was piteous. It moved the other man to scarce-concealed impatience.

'I thought we had settled all that, for once and for all.'

'I know, I know. But I want to think again. It means a lot for me.'

'Very well, then. Take ten minutes.' Charteris turned on his heel. 'You are a free agent, and your choice must be free-will. If you do not come at the end of that time, I shall go off alone.'

The words suddenly recalled Falconer to a sense of his own crisis. His train would soon be due at the Junction. Ten minutes' delay would nibble away a fatal deficit in his margin of time.

As he caught his breath in the anger of baffled purpose, hope revived once more. There was no reason to despair. The girl would go. Many a barely noticed hint and rumour recurred, all pointing to the inevitable conclusion. From Charteris's recent words, it was evident that she had already made up her mind. Her present misgiving was but the automatic recoil.

Quivering with impatience, he stood, waiting for her to move.

The minutes slowly ticked away, yet no second blot obscured the sky.

The door stood open in vain.

Every nerve in Falconer's frame chafed at the torture of delay. He writhed with the agony of some small wood-creature snared within sight of its hole. Would she never stir? His whole fate was interdependent with hers, yet she remained passive, squandering the last precious minutes in inert caprice.

With the whole force of his nature, he prayed that she would go.

The answer to his appeal came with startling celerity. Throwing back her head with a movement of resolution, Yvonne sprang to her feet. No hesitation was in her step as she passed towards the door.

It was his own savage throb of joy that awoke the submerged soul of Captain John Falconer. . . .

In the cumulative horror of that moment of realisation, he watched Yvonne.

Her hand was on the latch. For a space, she paused. Then—she closed the door. Upstairs she sped, the key tightly clasped in her hand, leaving Falconer standing once more inside the locked door.

E. L. WHITE.

AT A Y.M.C.A. HUT SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE.

BY ELLA C. SYKES.

'WELL, I really think you might do more useful work than helping to run a bun-shop for soldiers—turning taps for Tommies' teas!' Thus spoke a relative when I announced that I had 'signed on' to do canteen work for three months at the Y.M.C.A. Tartan Hut.

I had many answers to his remark later on, but this one from an Australian will suffice here: 'You ladies make the Hut a bit of home. You keep us out of the canteens, for after the way you serve us we can't stand having a man chuck the food at us.'

The Tartan Hut, the scene of my labours, consisted of a couple of long wooden buildings in the form of an L, one of them being filled with chairs and having a wide platform on which was a piano. This hall was used for services and concerts, the other Hut—fitted with a long counter at one end—being, as it were, the shop of the establishment. Half-way down the room was the cash-desk, where money was changed and penny tickets served out—English, French, Egyptian, and Indian coins having to be dealt with—and on the opposite side of the hall a tobacco-stall was placed later, taking off a great deal of pressure from the top counter.

I took to the work of saleswoman *con amore*, and was particularly fortunate in my fellow workers, with whom I lodged in a charming villa in the Forest until we all moved into a fantastic little house by the sea.

Our duties were as follows: We were motored to our work at a little past ten in the morning, and, until the counter opened, spent our time in making hundreds of sandwiches from ham and potted meat, or buttering legions of rolls and slices of bread—two hundred up to two hundred and fifty of the long French loaves being sometimes consumed in one day. One of us would set out the cakes upon the counter, fill up the lockers underneath from the store-room, and place specimens of what we sold on view on shelves. The Y.M.C.A. stocked about a hundred different articles, from tinned fish and fruits to boot-laces, pencils, and writing-tablets, and we had to know the price of each thing and be able to lay our hands upon it automatically.

At half-past one the Hut was closed and we motored home to a

2 P.M. dinner, leaving about 4 P.M. to resume work till 8.30, a somewhat late supper winding up the day.

It was my privilege to arrive just as the Tartan was having a 'boom' and beating the record of any other Hut in France as regards its receipts, the climax being reached when 2800 francs were taken in one day, and all in penny tickets. At that time we numbered only three women-workers with a few volunteers, and the hut was densely packed from end to end with a mass of men who fought and struggled good-humouredly with one another in their efforts to reach the counter.

It was not entirely easy for the workers to maintain their 'keep smiling' attitude, as the calls on us were unceasing, the afternoon passing without a single lull, and the crush gathering in intensity as closing-time drew near. We had to tear up the tickets—later on, tills were instituted into which we could thrust them whole—and until a separate tobacco-stall was set up, we never ceased racing from end to end of the counter in order to supply the multifarious wants of the tightly packed soldiers, who, when they were served, would throw themselves backward into the seething mass behind them and somehow fight their way out of the press.

Few of the men would give their whole order at once. For example, a Scotchman would hold up a ticket and demand a 'brad,' and as soon as the worker had got the slice of bread-and-butter and handed it to her customer, a second ticket would be produced with the remark, 'Anither,' and the performance had to be repeated. A third ticket would be handed out for 'spice brad' (currant cake), and others for woodbines (known as fags or coffin-nails), tobacco, matches, soap, and so on. One had to try to grasp the slight difference in the word 'cauel' (a candle) and 'caumel' (a packet of caramels): one day I was asked for 'nugget,' and promptly handing a tin of boot-polish I was covered with confusion when I found that 'nougat' was desired, and on another occasion, when I did not know that 'bawbin' meant a reel of cotton, my customer said reprovingly, 'I spoke to ye in plain English!'

The men were particularly fond of custard slices, which they called among themselves by the unattractive name of 'dead hands,' also vanilla sandwiches dubbed 'religieuses' by the French pastry-cook, and what *she* called English cakes were known by the men as Dorothy buns or 'busters.' In a case of 'dolly cakes' sent from Dublin, we found a letter written by a girl-packer in which

she boldly offered herself in marriage to the soldier who came across her missive, but prudently added a postscript to the effect that if the man were married she hoped that he would hand on her proposal to a bachelor comrade!

One cold April day there was a snowstorm, and in the midst of it Australians and New Zealanders, the heroes of Gallipoli, invaded our Hut, made themselves at home straightway and became great friends with the Scotch, with whom they seemed to have a natural affinity. We women took to them at once, one reason being that they had come thousands of miles to fight for the Empire and appealed to our sympathy, for many had had no letters for months and were desperately home-sick.

As a rule they were splendid-looking men, lean and sinewy, with clear-cut features, frank eyes, and beautiful teeth, with the walk of those accustomed to live in the air and in the open spaces of the earth, and they numbered many a son of Anak in their ranks.

The 'Hut' manners of the new-comers were beyond reproach. We were always addressed as 'Madame' or 'Lady,' and rewarded with a salute and a beaming smile if we did any little extra thing for our customers. 'You are the first lady we've spoken to since we left Australia' (or New Zealand, as the case might be) 'and you've no idea what a treat it is,' was said to all of us several times.

Certainly this charm of manner was in strong contrast to that of many a 'Tommy' or 'Jock' who gave their orders curtly and imperatively, with never a 'please' or 'thank you.' Of this apparent rudeness one of their own officers wrote as follows :

'Their consistent abstinence from all the minor graces and politenesses is more than real abstinence, because based on real hatred and fear of anything of the kind. . . .'

Be this as it may, I can vouch for my fellow-workers and myself that we never had a rude word or look while in the Hut, nor did a single man ever swear in our hearing.

The Anzacs soon confided in the Y.M.C.A. ladies to a flattering extent. For example, I was asked to take charge of one man's money, was entrusted with a treasure for another's wife, and was requested to find the address in England of the long-lost uncle of a strapping youth. This latter task, which appeared fraught with some difficulty, was satisfactorily accomplished owing to the energy of a friend of mine, and the nephew was delighted when his relative wrote, warmly inviting him to his home.

We did a good deal of shopping for the men who frequented

the Tartan. They brought their watches to be mended in an unceasing stream; some had lost their identification discs and wanted new ones to be engraved; a man from the Public Schools Corps requested me to get a manual for the training of officers; another needed a French novel, as he hoped for promotion if he could improve himself in the language, and an intelligent Scotch sergeant required French lessons to be arranged for him. He had seen a notice, 'Lessons of French,' pasted up in the window of a house in the town, and applied to the Y.M.C.A. worker to inquire for him as to times and prices.

We supplied brown paper, string, needles, cottons, pins, labels, and so on gratis, and had iodine and bandages at hand, dressing many a cut or small wound, and in all probability often saving our careless patients from the septic poisoning so prevalent in the camp.

The flowers of the season that we kept on the counter were a source of pleasure to many. 'It's such a relief to see these after the khaki,' one of them said, and sometimes our friends would pick off a flower or leaf to enclose in their letters. The lilac reminded British and Anzac alike of home, and it went to my heart to see the longing in their eyes as they touched the petals.

One day an Australian showed me a big bundle of letters. 'This is my first mail for six months,' he explained, 'and it makes me feel real bad. You go along from day to day and don't think much about things, but when a mail comes you understand how far away you are from home and you want your own folk dreadfully. Lots of our fellows just shut themselves up in their tents when they get their letters, and won't come out.'

The Anzacs had come direct from the heat of Egypt, and felt the cold and wet very much, the great majority succumbing to a virulent kind of influenza which made the Hut resound to a perfect hurricane of coughing. We sold hundreds of packets of eucalyptus jujubes—'lollies' the men called them—but things did not improve until a spell of warm weather arrived. We workers were all afflicted with the same complaint, and our drives in open cars to and from the Tartan only aggravated our colds and sore throats.

The new arrivals spoke strongly in praise of the Hut—in fact many assured us that they could not have stood the confinement in camp without it. 'If only we could have had this in Gallipoli!' one man exclaimed, and another remarked that they got good value for their money and were never pressed to buy as in ordinary

shops. 'This is the first time we've come here, but you'll see us often again—you make the place so home-like somehow,' was one remark, and the fact that we women had come over from England to do our 'bit' was the subject of much flattering comment from our customers, who never took us as a matter of course. 'If you ladies knew what the whole camp thinks of you it would *hurt* you,' was said to me on one occasion ; and on another, ' You always serve us as if you liked doing it. How do you find us ? Some of us are rather a wild lot.' I said what we of the Tartan thought of our customers, and he replied, ' Oh, all of us show you our best side of course, but I'm glad you think well of Australia.'

Again and again we were adjured not to work too hard, the speaker of the moment being sure that we were overtiring ourselves, and as we drove to and fro we were greeted by many a friend, men saluting us from the ranks in defiance of military discipline.

To one Australian who was talking to me of his home and family, I said 'It must have been a great wrench to have left them' ; and the answer came, ' Yes, it was, but I should never have been satisfied all the rest of my life if I hadn't come,' and that was the spirit animating one and all. Boys of sixteen who had enlisted, pretending that they were older, were wild to go to the Front, and the Gallipoli heroes, whom one would have supposed to have had enough of warfare, were chafing at their detention in the Base Camp. ' The Canadians have made such a name for themselves that we want to have a look in on the West and see whether we can't do something,' was a common remark.

Of course everyone took the deepest interest in the history that made itself from day to day, but we had also local excitements, one of which was the capture of a spy.

A man in the New Zealand uniform had accosted two Australians who were the worse for drink and had accompanied them to their tent, questioning them as to what troops were quartered in the camp. Fortunately a corporal noticed that the guest's putties were of the pattern worn by our Tommies, and arrested him on the spot. The spy affirmed that he was French, but when accosted by natives it was found that he could hardly speak their language.

The keen-eyed corporal was given two stripes, fifty pounds, and a fortnight in England, this last being looked upon by his comrades as the *ne plus ultra*. Men often said that they hoped they might be wounded badly enough to go to Blighty, the longing to see

what one and all looked upon as the Motherland being very strong. 'What did you think of England?' I said to one who had just returned from a fortnight's visit. 'It was all I had thought and a great deal more,' he replied, and his whole face lit up.

Zeppelins visited the camp one night, dropping a few bombs that fortunately did no harm, and next day the men told us that a Taube had scattered leaflets with the information that the Germans intended to destroy the whole camp in three days' time—a threat that was never executed.

Every now and again I was asked to take a turn at the cash desk, when the Y.M.C.A. officials were short-handed, and thoroughly enjoyed the change of work, especially on pay-days, when the crowd seemed unending. The men stood in a long *queue*, never jostling one another and amused to see me measuring off the strings of ten-centime tickets with the help of notches cut on the desk. When five or seven francs' worth of tickets were demanded it was like reeling off ribbon at a counter. The highly paid Anzaes usually proffered twenty-franc notes, and always asked for their tickets in multiples of ten, but the British soldier never seemed to grasp the decimal coinage, and would demand twelve or six tickets out of his five-franc note. New arrivals offered English coins, and were interested to find that a shilling was worth 1 franc 45 centimes; half a crown 3 francs 55 centimes, while 28 francs 55 centimes was the equivalent of a pound note, though to their chagrin an English sovereign only realised 27 francs.

Many of the Scotch were very taciturn, and frequently pointed to the articles they wanted to buy without vouchsafing a word. I always humoured them, and business was transacted in complete silence on either side. However, once at the tobacco-stall I forced a dour-looking sergeant to speak. At the time matches were extremely scarce, and in order to make them go round we were only allowed to sell one box to each man. 'Jock' pushed two tickets towards me and pointed at the matches. I gave him one box and returned the second ticket, which he thrust vehemently at me again, and again I returned it in silence. This was too much for him, and he burst into speech: 'Twa matches.' 'Oh, you aren't dumb after all,' and his stern face broke into a broad grin while I explained why his demand could not be granted.

During May Her Highness Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, who I understand originated the idea of getting women

to work in the Y.M.C.A. Huts, came to inspect the Tartan. The Anzacs were particularly interested in the visit of 'the first cousin of our King,' one of them saying that he had always been a Socialist, but a week in England had changed his point of view. One day he saw Queen Alexandra drive past, and something impelled him to wave his slouched hat and cheer wildly with the crowd. 'After that,' he remarked, 'I saw that there was a lot about Royalty that I hadn't understood before.'

At intervals the Hut was visited by concert parties organised by a talented actress, the artists being received with such storms of enthusiasm that they said it would be hard to perform to any ordinary audience after the soldiers. The men also had their own sing-songs, the Australians producing a mesmeriser who sent us all into fits of uncontrollable laughter by the comic situations into which he put the men whom he had hypnotised.

And making friends with the soldiers, preaching and lecturing constantly, was a certain Padre who had the gift of appealing to the best in every man. It did us all good to see the humorous face in which were set the eyes of the dreamer and idealist, and his sermons must have been an inspiration to those who lived from day to day in expectation of facing death. His lectures were always addressed to packed audiences, and never did his forceful personality reveal itself more clearly than in one entitled 'The Position of Belgium.' It was a complicated bit of history, and extracts from treaties and suchlike somewhat dry matters were woven into it, but the lecturer's intense interest in his subject communicated itself to the whole assembly, and one did not wonder at the verdict of the camp, 'We'd rather hear Captain M—— any day than go to a variety show!'

The Library was a great resource for the men, as the wet and stormy weather kept them so much indoors. But though the Anzacs carefully recorded their names and the title of the book they took out they were, alas, not nearly so punctilious in the matter of returning the volumes. Certainly some grateful spirits not only brought back missing books—in too many cases found on rubbish heaps—but presented the Library with others, yet on the whole the arrivals from the Antipodes swept the shelves clear, as if they had been crops visited by a swarm of locusts.

Most of the men liked novels, but some were keen on serious reading, and one youth remarked as he showed me a book of

poems, 'I read one of these every morning and it hangs about me all day.'

A constant visitor was a British journalist who had come from South America to join in the Great Adventure, and much wanted to write some account of his recent experiences. But he complained that his impressions got blurred, as one thing followed on another as quickly as the pictures in a cinema show. He found it doubly difficult, as he had been living in a land of Mañana, where events happened slowly, and he could digest them at his leisure while sitting on his verandah.

An omnivorous reader was an elderly Irishman who was working on the Rand when the War broke out, and joined Botha's forces, being present at the victorious entry into Windhoek. Not content with this, he took ship to Australia and, donning the slouch hat, came from the Land of the Southern Cross to fight the Empire's battles in France. In contrast to him were men who owned frankly that they had never read before and wanted something short—'a long story is so tiring.'

A thick-set man with a beaming smile browsed on the contents of the shelves marked 'Serious Reading,' and we noticed that he hardly spent anything on himself, unlike the usual run of Anzacs, who thought nothing of buying twenty cakes. Remarking on this to our Hut Leader, he said that my acquaintance had already given three donations to the work of the Y.M.C.A., confirming what I had already suspected, that he denied himself in order to help others.

The Hut was provided with newspapers, and 'Blighty'—a collection of the best pictures and anecdotes from the comic papers—was given free, and greatly appreciated. The Anzacs were eager to go to the real 'Blighty,' but had to give an address in England, to which place their tickets would be made out. However, men from the Antipodes were not to be kept back by such a trifle, and one explained to me that those who possessed no friends across the Channel would 'fake' addresses.

As a rule Australians and New Zealanders hated the confinement of camp, and were for ever grumbling at the discipline to which they were subjected. 'They'll break our hearts if they give us too much of the Bull Ring' (their name for the training-ground) was a constant complaint, and the British officer was a ~~handy~~ puzzle to many. 'He thinks himself a better class than his men.

Now our officers are just the same as we are, and a private often "treats" his officer, and if they're a good sort we'll follow them and do all they want. We can be led, but not bullied. None of us would stand all the discipline that your men have to put up with. Oh, how we pity your Tommies !

Punishment for lack of discipline was bitterly resented, and I was told how things were under the Southern Cross, where a man 'downs tools' just as he pleases, with no sort of notice to his employers. In spite of this, one and all were unanimous in praise of General Birdwood, 'a white man through and through,' as he was usually described.

With us they were on terms of a pleasant equality, having no idea of the class distinctions that made the Tommies look upon us as 'gentry.'

Two or three weeks after the slouch hat and the broad-brimmed round felt had invaded our Hut, an epidemic of mumps and measles broke out among the Anzacs, and accordingly the Tartan was declared to be out of bounds to all the British troops. Until this order was repealed we had about half our usual customers, and in consequence were able to individualise the men from the Antipodes, and make friends in a way that was impossible when business was in full swing. Those who were ill were supposed to be confined in an Isolation Camp, but one day as I entered the Library an Australian remarked to me cheerfully, 'This place *is* a boon. I really don't know how we could get on in the Isolation Camp without these books !'

At intervals detachments of our friends were sent to the Front, and it was hard to say good-bye to those who might never return. A handshake and good wishes, uttered often with a lump in my throat, were always received with grateful thanks. My heart went out in particular to the boys whose mothers were thousands of miles away, many of them living far from news on lonely farms and outlying stations. The faces of some of their sons rise before me. One who was only just seventeen had lost two brothers at Gallipoli and was very home-sick. At the end of our talk he pressed his badge into my hand as a keepsake, and I cherish it along with the pink satin heart given me by another boy who insisted that the little I had done for him when ill had saved him from being left behind while his comrades went off. Then there was the 'Imp,' curly-headed, with bold black eyes and the physique of a prize-fighter. He was full of mischief and the 'joie

de vivre' when I knew him first, but he returned to the Hut after a spell at the Front considerably sobered down. At my greeting his face puckered up and he exclaimed just like a spoilt child, 'I've had enough of the whole thing. I don't want to go back and make the daisies burst up. I want my home,' and the cry came from his very heart.

'Of course you do, but you have to see this through first,' seemed somehow to cheer him up. 'That's so,' he muttered, nodding his head approvingly, and the light returned to his eyes and the swagger to his walk.

Sometimes as I watched the men, so full of spirits as a rule, I fiercely resented the thought that shell and bullet would lay many of them low, and far worse, that many would return to their homes broken and maimed. As an Australian remarked one day, 'None of us understood what war meant until the first shipload of our wounded arrived. When our folks saw the blinded men they began to realise things a bit.'

Even in the Tartan there were several victims of shell-shock, some being mere boys with a terrified look in their eyes. One of my friends, a fine-looking man, could not understand that after nineteen months of warfare, without a scratch, all his nerves should give way because some earth from a bursting shell struck his face. But the Medical Board had declared him unfit for further service, and he came to bid me good-bye. 'I haven't a single bad mark against my name,' he said. 'Before I left home I promised my sister that I'd behave, and I've kept my word, though it's been hard not to drink sometimes when I've been with the boys.' I trust that the sea-voyage and his temperate habits will restore him to health, for I always regretted that these splendid men viewed drunkenness with too lenient an eye. As one of them remarked to me, 'We don't look upon it in the way you do—it isn't anything to keep a man awake at night about.'

Three happy months slipped by, and I could hardly believe that the time had come for me to go home. The Hut was a part of my life, and little seemed to matter save the welfare of the men and the progress of the war. Shall I ever meet any of them again, I wonder?

What has become of the white-haired man, erect and sinewy, who had been one of the earliest leaders in the campaign that ended in the complete triumph of the Labour party in Australia? He had known Hughes when the eloquent Prime Minister was poor

and obscure, and he took much trouble in explaining to me the state of politics in the Antipodes.

Then there were John and Alf, our cheery and willing boy-orderlies from Birmingham, who had enlisted at the tender age of sixteen. 'We couldn't stand the posters, and as lots of grown-up men wouldn't do their "bit" we just *had* to enlist.' Thus John explained one day, and added that when his widowed mother, whose only child he was, heard the news, she took to her bed for a fortnight. I was glad to hear that he and all the other boys under eighteen were to be restored to their homes, for the grim realities of life 'up the Line' are a terrible strain to such young lads, full of pluck as all of them were.

Another of our orderlies, British born, had had a chequered career. He had worked as a cow-boy in the States, and had got a lucrative billet in Mexico, when he was captured by Villa's forces and cast into prison. 'They only gave me food when they felt like it' was his comment on his imprisonment, and finally he was brought down to the coast in chains. On the outbreak of War he took ship to Tasmania and enlisted under the Australian flag, going through the Gallipoli campaign unscathed.

These are but a few glimpses of a great and gallant company, men who at the call of Duty went to meet Death with 'proud unreluctant feet,' one and all offering up their lives without compulsion in the sacred cause of Justice and Freedom.

LIEUTENANT CÆSAR.

BY BENNET COPPLESTONE.

WHEN the war is over and tens of thousands of young men, who have drunk deep of the wine of life, are thrown back upon ginger ale, what will be the effect upon their heads and stomachs ? I do not know ; I have no data, except in the one instance of my friend, Lieutenant Cæsar, R.N.V.R.

I must write of him with much delicacy and restraint, for his friendship is too rich a privilege to be imperilled. His sense of humour is dangerously subtle. Cæsar is twenty-three, and I am—well, fully twice his age—yet he bears himself as if he were infinitely my senior in years and experience. And he is right. What in all my toll of wasted years can be set beside those crowded twenty-two months of his, now ended and done with ? The fire of his life glowed during those months with the white intensity of an electric arc ; in a moment it went black when the current was cut off ; he was left groping in the darkness for matches and tallow candles. I dare not sympathise with him openly, though I feel deeply, for he would laugh and call me a silly old buffer—a term which I dread above all others.

The variegated career of Lieutenant Cæsar fills me with the deepest envy. When the war broke out he was a classical scholar at Oxford, one of the bright spirits of his year. His First in Greats, his prospects of the Ireland, his almost certain Fellowship—he threw them up. The Army had no interest for him, but to the Navy he was bound by links of family association. To the Navy therefore he turned, and prevailed upon a somewhat reluctant Admiralty to gazette him as a Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. ‘A classical scholar,’ argued Whitehall, ‘is about as much use to us as a ruddy poet. What can this young man do away from his books ?’ Cæsar rapidly marshalled his poor accomplishments. He could row—no use, we are in the steam and petrol age ; he had been a sergeant of O.T.C.—no thanks, try the Royal Naval Division ; he could drive a motor-car and was a tolerable engineer. At last some faint impression was made. Did he understand the engines of a motor-boat ? It appeared that he

did ; was, in fact, a mildly enthusiastic member of the Royal Motor Boat Club at Southampton. 'Now you're talking,' said Whitehall. 'Why didn't you say this at once instead of wasting our time over your useless frillings ?' The official wheels stirred, and within two or three weeks Cæsar found himself gazetted, and dropped into a fine big motor patrol boat, which the Admiralty had commandeered and turned to the protection of battleships from submarines. At that time we had not a safe harbour anywhere except on the South Coast, where they did not happen to be wanted. For many months Cæsar patrolled by night and day deep cold harbours on the east coast of Scotland, hunting periscopes. It was an arduous but exhilarating service. His immediate chief, a Lieutenant R.N.V.R., was a benevolent American, the late owner of the boat. He had handed her over without payment in return for a lieutenant's commission. 'I was once,' he declared, 'a two-striper in Uncle Sam's Navy. I got too rich for my health, chucked the Service, and have been eating myself out of shape. Take the boat but, for God's sake, give me the job of running her. She's too pretty for your thumb-crushing blacksmiths to spoil.' When reminded that he was an alien, he treated the objection as the thinnest of evasive pleas. 'I haven't any use for that poor prune Woodrow,' he wrote, 'King George is my man ; there are no diamonds in his garters.' The Lords of the Admiralty, who never in their sheltered lives had read such letters as now poured in upon them, gasped, collapsed, and gave to the benevolent neutral all that he asked.

Cæsar worshipped the big motor-boat and her astonishing commander. His first love wrapped itself round the twin engines, two of them, six-cylinders each, 120 horse-power. They were ducks of engines which never gave any trouble, because Cæsar and the two American engineers—I had almost written nurses—were always on the watch to detect the least whimper of pain. But though he never neglected his beloved engines, the mysterious fascinations of the three-pounder gun in the bows gradually vanquished his mature heart. Her deft breech mechanism, her rapid loading, the sweet, kindly way she slipped to and fro in her cradle, became charms before which he succumbed utterly. Cæsar and the gun's high-priest, a petty officer gun-layer, became the closest of friends, and the pair of them would spend hours daily cleaning and oiling their precious toy. The American lieutenant had his own bizarre notions of discipline—he thought nothing of addressing the petty

officer as 'old horse'; but he worked as hard as Cæsar himself, kept everyone in the best of spirits through the vilest spells of weather, and was a perpetual fount of ingenious plans for the undoing of Fritz. The *Mighty Buzzer*—named from her throbbing exhaust—was a happy ship.

The *Buzzer's* career as a king's ship was brief, and her death glorious. One night, or rather early morning, she was far out in the misty jaws of a Highland loch, within which temporarily rested many great battle-cruisers. Cæsar despised these vast and potent vessels. 'What use are they?' he would ask of his chief. 'There is nothing for them to fight, and they would all have been sunk long ago but for us.' Fast motor-boats, with 120 horse-power engines, twenty-five knots of speed—thirty at a pinch, untruthfully claimed the Lieutenant—and beautiful three-pounder guns were, in Cæsar's view, the last word in naval equipment. The Lieutenant would shake his head gravely at his Sub's exuberant ignorance. 'They are gay old guys just now,' he would reply, 'and feeling pretty cheap. But some day they will get busy and knock spots off Fritz's hide. You Britishers are darned slow, but when you do get a gun it's time to shin up trees. The Germs have stirred up the British Lion real proper and, I guess, wish now they'd let him stay asleep.'

The *Buzzer* had chased many a German submarine, compelling it to dive deeply and become harmless, but never yet had Cæsar been privileged to see one close. Upon this misty morning of her demise, when he gained fame, she was farther out to sea than usual, and was cruising at about the spot where enterprising U-boats were wont to come up to take a bearing. I am writing of the days before our harbour defences had chilled their enterprise into inanition. Cæsar was on watch, and stood at the wheel amidships. The petty officer and a bluejacket were stationed at the gun forward. Our friend's senses were very much alert, for he took his duties with the utmost seriousness. Near his boat the sea heaved and swirled, and as he saw a queer wave pile up he became, if possible, even more alert and called to his watch to stand by. The sea went on swirling, the surface broke suddenly, and up swooped the hood and thin tube of a periscope. It was less than fifty yards away, and for a moment the lenses did not include the *Buzzer* within their field of vision. For Cæsar, his watch on deck, and the sleepers below, the next few seconds were packed with incident. Round came the *Buzzer* pointing straight for the periscope, the exhaust roared as Cæsar

called for full speed, and the gun crashed out. Away went periscope and tube, wiped off by the spreading cone of the explosion, as if they were no more substantial than a bullrush, and up shot the *Buzzer's* bows as Cæsar drove her keel violently upon the top of the conning-tower of the rising U-boat. Keel and conning-tower ripped together ; there was a tremendous rush of air-bubbles, followed by oil, and the U-boat was no more. She had gone, and the *Buzzer*, with six feet of her tender bottom torn off, was in the act to follow. As she cocked up her stern to dive after her prey there was just time to get officers and crew into lifebelts and to signal for help. Cæsar met in the water his commanding officer, who, though nearly hurled through his cabin walls by the shock, and entirely ignorant of the cataclysm in which he had been involved, was cheerful as ever. 'Sakes,' he gasped, when he had cleared mouth and nose of salt water, 'when you Britishers do get busy, things—sort of—hum.'

A destroyer rushing down picked up the swimmers, and heard their story. The evidence was considered sufficient, for oil still spread over the sea, and there were no rocks within miles to have ripped out the *Buzzer's* keel, so another U-boat was credited to the Royal Navy and Cæsar became a lieutenant. It was a proud day for him.

But he had lost his ship, and was for a time out of a job. The new harbour defences were under weigh and fast motor-boats were for a while less in demand. The Admiralty solved the problem of his future. 'This young man,' it observed, 'is nothing better than a temporary lieutenant of the Volunteer Reserve, but he is not wholly without intelligence and has a pretty hand with a gun. We will teach him something useful.' So the order was issued that Lieutenant Cæsar should proceed to Whale Island, there to be instructed in the mysteries of naval gunnery. 'You will have to work at Whale Island,' warned the captain of his flotilla, 'and don't you forget it. It is not like Oxford.' This to reduce Cæsar to the proper level of humility.

Up to this stage in his career Lieutenant Cæsar, though temporarily serving with the Royal Navy, knew nothing whatever about it. His status was defined for me once by a sergeant of Marines : 'A temporary gentleman, sir, 'ere to-day and gone to-morrow, and good riddance, sir.' Upon land the corps and regiments have been swamped by temporaries, but at sea the Regular Navy remains in full possession. In the barracks at Whale Island, where Cæsar

was assigned quarters, he felt like a very small schoolboy newly joining a very large school. His fellow-pupils were R.N.R. men, mercantile brass-bounders with mates' and masters' certificates, and R.N.V.R.s drawn from diverse classes. To him they seemed a queer lot. He lay low and studied them, finding most of them wholly ignorant of everything which he knew, but profoundly versed in things which he didn't. The instructors of the Regular Service gave him his first definite contact with the Navy. 'My original impression of them,' he told me laughing, 'was that they were all mad. I had come to learn gunnery, but for a whole week they insisted upon teaching me squad drill, about the most derisory version of drill which I have ever seen. Picture us, a mob of mates out of liners and volunteers out of workshops and technical schools, trailing rifles round the square at Whale Island, feeling dazed and helpless, and wondering if we had brought up by mistake at a lunatic asylum. After the first week, during which Whale Island indulged its pathetic belief that its true *métier* is squad drill, we were all right. We got busy at the guns, and found plenty to learn.' It was at Whale Island that he received the name of Cæsar, the one Latin author of which his messmates had any recollection. During the first month of his training he daily cursed Winchester and Oxford for the frightful gaps which they had left in his educational equipment. He could acquire languages with anyone, but mathematics, that essential key to the mysteries of gunnery, gave him endless trouble. But he had a keenly tempered brain and limitless persistence. Slowly at first, more rapidly later, he made up on his contemporaries, and when after two months of the toughest work of his life he gained a first-class certificate, he felt that at last he had tasted of real success.

Time brings its revenges. As a Sub in a motor-boat he had affected to think slightly of the great battle-cruisers which his small craft protected, but now that he was transferred to one of the new Cats of the First Battle Cruiser Squadron his views violently changed. Battleships were all very well, they had huge guns and tremendous armour, but when it came to speed and persistent aggressiveness what were these sea monsters in comparison with the Cats? Why nothing, of course. Which shows that Cæsar was becoming a Navymen. Put a naval officer into the veriest tub which can keep herself afloat with difficulty, and steam five knots in a tideway, and he will exalt her into the most efficient craft beneath the White Ensign. For she is His Ship.

Lieutenant Cæsar very quickly became at one with his new

ship, and entered into his kingdom. Whether upon the loading platform of a turret or in control of a side battery, he serenely took up his place and felt that he had expanded to fill it adequately. His tone became obtrusively professional. When I asked for some details of his hardships and his thrills, he sneered at me most rudely. 'There are no hardships,' he declared; 'we live and grow fat, and there is not a thrill to the whole war. My motor-boat was a desperate buccaneer in comparison with these stately Founts of Power. Every week or two we do a Silent Might parade in the North Sea, but nothing ever happens.' This was after the Dogger Bank action, for which he was too late, and before the Jutland Battle. He wrote to me many veiled accounts of the North Sea stunts upon which the battle-cruisers were persistently engaged, but always insisted that they were void of excitement.

'Dismiss from your landsman's mind,' he would write—Cæsar was now a sailor among sailors—'all idea of thrills. There aren't any. When the hoist Prepare to Leave Harbour goes up on the flagship, and black smoke begins to pour from every funnel in the Squadron, there is no excitement and no preparation—for we are already fully prepared. We go out with our attendant destroyers and light cruisers and scour at will over the "German Ocean" looking for Fritz, that we may fall upon him. But he is too cunning for us. I wish that we had some scouting airships.'

This wish of Lieutenant Cæsar is, I believe, shared by every officer in the Grand Fleet from the Commander-in-Chief downwards. Airships cannot fight airships or sea ships, and are of very little use as destructive agents, but they are bright gems in the firmament of scouts.

I asked Cæsar why he did not keep notes of his manifold experiences. 'It is against orders,' answered he sorrowfully. 'We are not allowed to keep a diary, and I have a rotten memory for those intimate details which give life to a story. If I could keep notes I would set up in business as a naval Boyd Cable.' But I am afraid that Cæsar was reckoning without the Naval Censor, a savage, hungry lion beside whom his brother of the Military Department is a complacent lamb. Cæsar has a pretty pen, but his hands are in shackles.

Cæsar bent his keen eyes upon those with whom he was associated, studied their strength and weakness, and delivered judgment, intolerant in its youthful sureness.

'The young lieutenants,' he wrote, 'are wonderful. Profoundly and serenely competent at their own work, but irresponsible as children in everything else. Their ideas of chaff and ragging never arise above those of the fifth form. Whenever they speak of the Empire they mean the one in Leicester Square. Shore leave for them means a bust at the Trocadero, with a music-hall to follow, preferably with a pretty girl. Their notions of shore life are of the earth earthy, not to say fleshy, but at sea work they approach the divine. There is not a two-striper in my wardroom who could not with complete confidence and complete competence take the Grand Fleet into action. But of education, as you or I understand the word, they have none. The Navy has been their strictly intensive life since they left school at about thirteen. Of art, or literature, or music—except in the crudest forms—they know nothing, and care nothing. And this makes their early retirement the more tragical. They go out, nine-tenths of them, before they reach forty without mental or artistic resources. The Navy is a remorseless user up of youth. Those who remain afloat, especially those without combatant responsibilities, tend to degenerate into S.O.B.s.'

I will not translate ; Cæsar is too young and too clever to be sympathetic towards those of middle age.

One afternoon in spring Lieutenant Cæsar was plunged without warning into the Jutland Battle. He and his like were placidly waiting at action stations in their turrets, when the order came to put live shell into the guns. For six hours he remained in his turret, serving his two 13·5-inch guns, but seeing nothing of what passed outside his thick steel walls. When I implored him to recount to me his experiences, he protested that he had none.

'You might as well ask a sardine, hermetically sealed in a tin, to describe a fire in a grocer's shop,' wrote he. 'I was that sardine, and so were nearly all of us. Those in the conning-tower saw something, and so did the officers in the spotting top when they were not being smothered by smoke and by water thrown up by bursting shells. But as for the rest of us—don't you believe the stories told you by eye-witnesses of naval battles. They are all second or third hand, and rubbish at that. When I have sorted the thing out from all those who did see, and collated the discrepant accounts, I will give you my conclusions, but I shall not be allowed to write them. For a literary man the Navy is a rotten service.'

Cæsar at this time wrote rather crossly. He had, I think, visualised himself as the writer some day of an immortal story of

the greatest naval battle in history. Now that he had been through it, he knew as little of it at first-hand as a heavy gunner in France does of the advancing infantry whose path forward he is cutting out.

The isolation of a busy turret in action may be realised when one learns that Cæsar knew nothing of the loss of the *Queen Mary*, *Indefatigable*, or *Invincible* until hours after they had gone to the bottom. He had heard nothing even of damage suffered by his own ship until, a grimy figure in frowsy overalls, he crawled through the roof of his big sardine tin and met in the darkness one of his friends who had been in the spotting top.

'There was a frightful row going on as we sat there on the turret's roof,' wrote Cæsar to me. 'Our destroyers were charging in upon Fritz's flying ships, which with searchlights and guns of all calibres were seeking to defend themselves. We could not fire for our destroyers were in the way. The horizon flamed like the aurora borealis, and now and then big shells, ricochetting, would scream over us. I enjoyed myself fine, and had no wish to seek safety in my turret, of which I was heartily sick. That is the only part of the action which I saw, and the details were buried in confusion and darkness. All the rest of the day I had been serving two hungry guns with shells and cordite, and firing them into unknown space. I was too intent on my duties to be bored, but I did not get the least bit of a thrill until I climbed out on the roof. Still I am glad to have been in the Battle, and I love my big wise guns.'

It was while his battle-cruiser was being refitted, and when he had just returned from a few days' leave, that the wheel of his destiny made another turn. He was howked struggling and kicking out of his turret as one plucks a periwinkle from its shell, and cast into a destroyer attached to the North Sea patrol. He had, as I have told, an easy knack of picking up languages. To a solid knowledge of German he had added in past vacations more than a speaking acquaintance with the Scandinavian tongues—Norse, Danish, and Swedish—and his industry was now turned to his undoing. Naval gunners were more plentiful than boarding officers who could converse with the benevolent and unbenevolent neutral, and Cæsar's unfortunate accomplishments clearly indicated him for a new job. At first he was furious, but became quickly reconciled. For, as he argued, fighting on a grand scale is over, Fritz has had such a gruelling that he won't come out any more; North Sea stunts will seem very tame after that day out

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by the Jutland coast; patrolling the upper waters of the North Sea cannot be quite dull, and cross-examining Scandinavian pirates may become positively exciting. So Cæsar settled down in his destroyer, in so far as any one can settle down in such an uneasy craft.

Cæsar now formed part of the inner and closer meshes of the North Sea blockade designed to intercept those ships which had penetrated the more widely spread net outside. Many of the masters whom he interviewed claimed to have a British safe-conduct, but Cæsar was not to be bluffed. With a rough and chocolate-hued skin he had acquired the peremptory air of a Sea God.

'It is rather good fun sometimes,' he wrote to me. 'We can't search big ships on the high seas at all thoroughly, and we don't want to send them all into port for examination, so we work a Black List. I have a list from the War Trade Department of firms which are not allowed to ship to neutral countries, and of all suspected enemy agents in those countries. The Norse, Danish and Dutch skippers are very decent and do their best to help, but the Swedes are horrid blighters. Whenever there is any doubt at all we send ships into port to be thoroughly examined there. You may take it that not much gets through now. Next to a complete blockade of all sea traffic for neutral ports—which I don't suppose the politicians can stomach—our Black List system seems to be the goods. I get good fun with these merchant skippers, and am becoming quite a linguist, but the work is less exciting than I had hoped. It is amusing to see a 7,000-ton tramp escorted into port by a twenty-foot motor-boat which she could sling up on her davits, but even this sight becomes a matter of course after a while. I have seen something of war from three aspects, and seem to have exhausted its sensations. They are greatly overrated.'

But Lieutenant Cæsar was destined to have one more experience before war had used him up and relaid him upon the shelf from which he was plucked in September 1914. A destroyer upon patrol duty is still a fighting vessel, and fights joyfully whenever she can snatch a plausible opportunity. Cæsar had sunk a submarine, served through the Jutland Battle, and assisted to stop the holes in the British blockade, but he had not yet known what fighting really means. That is reserved for destroyers in action. One afternoon he was cruising not far from the Dogger Bank, when the sound of light guns was heard a few miles off towards the east. The Lieut.-Commander in charge of our unit in H.M.S.

Blockade obeyed the Napoleonic rule and steered at once for the guns. In about ten minutes a group of small craft wreathed in smoke, lighted up at short intervals by gun flashes, appeared on the horizon, and roaring at her full speed of 34 knots the British destroyer swept down upon them. Presently seven trawlers were made out firing with their small guns at two German torpedo boats, which with torpedo and 23-pounder weapons were intent upon destroying them. One trawler was blown sky-high while Cæsar's ship was yet half a mile distant, and another rolled over shattered by German shell. 'It was a pretty sight,' said Cæsar, when I visited him in hospital, and learned to my deep joy that he was out of danger. 'When we got within a quarter of a mile we edged to starboard to give the torpedo tubes a clear bearing on the port bow. A shell or two flew over us, but the layers at the tubes took no notice. They waited till we were quite close, not more than two hundred yards, and then loosed a torpedo. I have never seen anything so quick and smart. I saw the mouldy drop and start, and then a huge column of water spouted up, blotting out entirely the nearest German boat. The water fell and set us tossing wildly, but I kept my feet and could see that German destroyer shut up exactly like a clasp-knife. She had been bust up amidships, her bow and stern almost kissed one another, and she went down vertically. The other turned to fly, firing heavily upon us, but our boys had her in their grip. We had three fine guns, 4-inch semi-automatics. We hit her full on the starboard quarter as she turned, and then raked her the whole length of her deck. I did not see the end, for earth and sky crashed all round me, and I went to sleep. When I awoke I was lying below, my right leg felt dead, but there was no pain, and from the horrid vibration running through the vessel I knew that we were at full speed.

"Did we get the other one?" I asked of my servant, whom I saw beside me. "She sunk proper, sir," said he. "You, sir, are the only casualty we 'ad." It was an honour which I found it difficult to appreciate. "What's the damage?" I muttered. "I'm afraid, sir," he replied diffidently, "that your right leg is blowed away." Then I fainted, and did not come round again till I was in hospital here. My leg is gone at the knee; I lost a lot of blood, and should have lost my life but for the tourniquet which the Owner himself whipped round my thigh. They have whittled the stump ship-shape here, and I am to have a new leg of the most fashionable design. The doctors say that I shall not know the difference when

I get used to it, and shall be able to play golf and even tennis. Golf and tennis ! Good games, but they seem a bit tame after the life I've led for the last two years.' Cæsar fell silent, and I gripped his hand.

'It isn't as if you were in the Regular Service,' I murmured. 'It isn't your career that's gone. That is still to come. You've done your bit, Cæsar, old man.'

His eyes glittered and a tear welled over and rolled down his cheek. That was all, the only sign of weakness and of regret for the lost leg and the lost opportunities for further service. When he spoke again it was the old cheerful Cæsar whom I knew. 'It seems funny. A month or two hence I shall be back at Oxford, reading philosophy and all sorts of absurd rubbish for my First in Greats. From Oxford I came, and to Oxford I shall return ; these two years of life will seem like a dream. A few years hence I shall have nothing but my medal and my wooden leg to remind me of them. It has been a good time, Copplestone—a devilish good time. I have done my bit, but I wasn't cut out for a fighting man. There is too much preparation and too little real business. I should have exhausted the thing and got bored. In time I should have become an S.O.B. like some of those others. No, Copplestone, I have nothing to regret, not even the lost leg. It is better to go out like this than to wait till the end of the war, and then to be among the Not Wanteds.'

'They've made you a Lieutenant-Commander,' I said slowly.

'Two and a half stripes,' he murmured. 'They look pretty, but they are only the wavy ones, not the real article. I was never anything but a "temporary blighter, 'ere to-day and gone to-morrow, and good riddance." It was decent of them to think of me, but stripes are no use to me now. I shall be at Oxford with the other cripples, and the weak hearts, and the aliens, and the conscientious objectors—what do the dregs of Oxford know of stripes ?'

I saw as much as I could of Cæsar during the weeks that followed. His mental processes interested me hugely. He has an enviable faculty of concentrating upon the job in hand to the complete exclusion of everything outside. He forgot Oxford in the Service, and now seemed to have almost forgotten the Service in his return to Oxford, and to what he calls civilisation. He was greatly taken up with the design for his wooden leg. I met him after his first visit to Roehampton to be measured, and found him

bubbling over with enthusiasm. 'Such legs and arms!' cried he. 'They are almost better than meat and bone ones. I saw a Tommy with a shorter stump than mine jumping hurdles and learning to kick. He was a professional footballer once. Another with a wooden arm could write and even draw. In a month or two's time, when my stump is healed solid and I have learnt the tricks of my new leg, it will be great sport exercising it and trying to find out what it can't do. A new interest in life.'

'You seem rather to like having a leg blown off,' I said wondering.

He is extraordinarily exuberant. I looked for depression after a month in hospital, but looked in vain. He builds up a future with as much zest as a youthful architect executes his first commission. The First in Greats is 'off'; Cæsar says that he has not time to bother about such things. 'I shall read History and modern French and Russian literature. History will do for my Final Schools, and Literature for my play. I shall learn Russian. Then when I have taken my degree I shall go in for the Foreign Office. My wooden leg will actually help me to a nomination, and the exam is nothing. It's not a bad idea; I thought of it last night.'

'You don't take long over a decision,' I remarked.

'I never did,' said he calmly.

When he returned to Oxford early in November he urged me to pay him a visit. I was in London a week or two later and having twenty-four hours to spare ran up to Oxford, established myself at the Clarendon, and summoned Cæsar to dine with me. All through the meal wonder grew upon me. For my very charming guest was an undergraduate in his fourth year, bearing no trace of having been anything else. We talked of Balzac, Anatole France, and Turgeniev. I listened politely to Cæsar's views upon German and Russian Church music. I learned that the scarcity of Turkish cigarettes was causing him distress, that his rooms were delightful, and that Oxford was a desert swept clear of his old friends. The war was never once referred to. His conversation abounded in slang with which I was not familiar—I come from the other shop. It was an insufferable evening, and I saw Cæsar hobble away upon his crutches with positive relief. He could use his leg a little, but the stump was still rather sore. That hobble was the one natural and human thing about him.

I passed a wretched night, came to a desperate resolution early in the morning, and carried it out about nine o'clock. Cæsar was

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in his 'delightful rooms.' They certainly had a pleasant aspect, but the furniture disgusted me; it might have been selected by a late-Victorian poet. I looked for a book or a picture which might connect Cæsar with the R.N.V.R., and looked in vain. He was busy trampling upon the best two years of his life and forgetting that he had ever been a man. It should not be. Presently he came in from his bedroom and began to talk in the manner of the night before, but I cut him short. 'Cæsar,' I said brutally, 'you are no better than an ass. Look at these rooms. Is this the place for a man who has lived and fought in a motor-boat, a battle-cruiser, and a t.b.d? You have sunk a German submarine, served in the Jutland Battle, and lost a leg in your country's service. Hug these things to your soul, don't throw them away. Brood upon them, write about them, but for the love of Heaven don't try to forget them.'

I saw his eyes light up, but he said nothing. His lips began to twitch and, knowing him as I did, I should have heeded their warning. But unchecked I drivelled on :

'Are you the man to shrink from an effort because of pain? Did you grouse when your leg was blown off? Wring all you can out of the future. Read History, join the F.O., study Russian. But do these things in a manner worthy of Lieutenant-Commander Cæsar, and don't try to revive the puling Oxford spark that you were two years ago before the war came to sweep the rubbish out of you.'

He gave a clumsy leap, tripped over his new leg, and fell into a chair. Lying there he laughed and laughed and laughed. How he laughed! Not loud, but deeply, thoroughly, persistently, as if to make up for a long abstinence.

'Confound you!' I growled. 'What the deuce are you laughing at?'

'You,' said Cæsar simply.

At the word the truth surged over me in a shameful flood. That preposterous dinner with its babble of Balzac and Tourgeniev, Church music, and Turkish cigarettes. These rooms stripped of all reminders of two strenuous years of war. That Oxford accent and the intolerable Oxford slang. 'Cæsar,' I shouted, joining in his exuberant laughter, 'you have been pulling my leg all the time.'

'All the time,' said he. 'My bedroom is full of stuff that I cleared out of here. Last night, Copplestone, your ever-lengthening

face was a lovely study, and I have wondered ever since how I kept in my laughter.'

' You young villain,' cried I, overjoyed to find that Cæsar was still my bright friend of the R.N.V.R. ' How shall I get even with you ? '

' I owe you some reparation,' said he, ' and here it is.' He hobbled over to his desk and drew out a great roll of paper. ' This is the first instalment ; there are lots more to come. For the last month I have been trying to remember, not to forget. I am writing of everything that I have done and seen and heard and felt during those two splendid years. Everything. It will run to reams of paper and months of time. When it is finished you shall have it all. Take it, saturate yourself in it, add your spells to it. We will stir up the compound of Copplestone and Cæsar until it ferments, and then distil from the mass a Great Work. It shall be ours, Copplestone—yours and mine. Will you have me as your partner ? '

' With the greatest pleasure in life,' I cried.

We discussed our plans in full detail, and parted the best of friends. Cæsar is rekindling the ashes of a life which I had thought to be extinguished ; soon there will be a great and glowing fire of realised memory which will keep warm the years that are to come. He has solved the problem of his immediate future. But what of those others, those tens of thousands, who when the war is over will seek for some means to keep alive the fires which years of war have lighted in their hearts ? Are they to be merged, lost, in the old life as it was lived before 1914 ? Are they to degenerate slowly but surely into S.O.B.s, intent only upon earning a living somehow, playing bad golf, or looking on at football matches ? I do not know, I have no data, and it is rather painful to indulge oneself in speculation.

LETTERS OF 'CHINESE GORDON.'

BY HORACE HUTCHINSON.

I RECALL with painful vividness, as I write, a dreadful morning on which I was awakened by the newsboys calling in the streets 'Death of General Gordon.' There was then more of this ghoulish crying of horrors than is permitted now, and one after another passed along shrilly or raucously shouting the tragedy.

The evening before I had been at the theatre with a friend who was a Scot. In a box were Lord and Lady Dalhousie, whom my Scottish friend knew, and between two of the acts he went up to see them. When he came back to me he said 'Do you know who was in that box?' I replied 'No,' for evidently he did not mean either of the persons named, since we had already spoken of them. 'Old Gladstone's there,' he said.

I looked up curiously then, but from our place in the stalls could make out no more than that there was a figure sitting in the twilight of the back of the box.

Later there was great public indignation when it was found that Mr. Gladstone could go to the play at a moment when it appeared that he must have known of the tragic event which the newsboys woke me by proclaiming. It was somewhat debated whether he did know, and even whether he was at the play at all. On the former point I can say nothing, but of the latter I am quite sure, for the simple reason given. Lord Morley in his 'Life of Gladstone' indicates that the Premier did know of the calamity, but adds in a footnote: 'The story that he went to the theatre the same night is untrue.'

For my own part, though Gordon was my friend, I failed to see reason for the popular wrath. Whatever the rights and wrongs of Gladstone's Cabinet in dealing with the situation at Khartoum, it is hard to see why a sorely harassed and grieved man, as Mr. Gladstone most unquestionably was by the event, should not try to find a little relaxation from the stress after the blow had fallen and no effort could prevent it. Political unwisdom, in the visit to the theatre, undoubtedly there was, as the popular storm itself bore witness, but no moral wrong or lack of feeling was involved in it. And of this we may be very certain, that if there was one man who would not wish the way of a survivor affected by the

accident of his death that man was 'Chinese Gordon.' He looked upon terrestrial death as a very trivial episode in the story of the soul, and for his own part, as the following extracts from his letters will show, expected it with eager longing as the gate to happiness.

I write of him as 'Chinese Gordon' because that was the title by which I knew him best. I write of him as my friend, but that is something of a presumption, seeing it was such friendship as a grown and tried man may allow to a boy. He came into my life through the chance that his most intimate friend, as I suppose, was one of my godfathers, General Sir William Gordon, of Harpendfield, no relation, though a namesake, of Charles. Sir William had commanded what was known to fame in the Crimean War as 'Gordon's battery,' before Sebastopol. He was connected with our family by the marriage of his sister to my uncle. Charles Gordon was with his friend Sir William when he died, devotedly nursing him in his last illness, and in these sad circumstances formed the friendship with my mother that led to the correspondence of which the following letters are a part.

He was very kind to me and helped to foster in my mind a love of natural history which I have never lost and for which I owe him much gratitude. One of my most cherished possessions is a 'Kirby and Spence's Entomology' which he gave me in the year 1870. He used to come and see me at a private school near Winchester, where I then was.

Another of his gifts to me was regarded with rather dubious favour by the authorities. It was a case of taxidermist's implements. It comprised, amongst other joyful things, a scalpel of amazing sharpness, with which it was predicted by many an anxious relative that I should cut my fingers to the bone. But no grievous calamity occurred and I spent much of my holidays in skinning small birds and setting them up in attitudes far more marvellous than any they had displayed in life. If the present was a daring one to deliver into a small boy's hands, assuredly it showed a fine sympathetic knowledge of the things that delight a boy's heart, and showed, moreover, kindly consideration in their selection. Manifestly he must have visited a shop an' made a choice of the right gift with some pains. Of course I did not appreciate all this at the time, but I am able to realise it now. It would have been far less trouble to give me the half-sovereign, or whatever it may have been, that the case cost; but it never was Gordon's way to save himself trouble in his kind deeds.

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There was about him a boyish, almost a childish, simplicity and directness which gave him the power of appealing very intimately to a boy's mind and heart. To me, hardly more than a child, he would talk even then of God and of Jesus Christ as if they were personal friends whom we knew in common. He never had the least sense of embarrassment in speaking of his religion, and this perfect absence of self-consciousness freed him from that very British shyness which makes so many of us ashamed of exhibiting what is really the finest in our thoughts and feelings. And by virtue of this freedom from all self-consciousness on his own part he was able to help others to throw off their own reserves and to show forth the best that they had in them. It was all, of course, but one aspect of his utter fearlessness, demonstrating itself thus on the moral side, as often, in other crises of his strenuous life, in the face of physical peril.

The present moment seems peculiarly the right one for giving to the world some letters which set forth the religious belief of a very great soldier and hero. It is wholly unnecessary—it would be little short of an impertinence—for me to insist on that greatness and heroism. The very name of Gordon can hardly fail to suggest an incarnation of heroic virtues.

There is, however, one side of his extraordinarily complex character to which I would invite attention, because I think that it has often been overlooked, obscured by the more striking qualities—his hard-headedness. He was R.E.—a sapper—primarily a scientific soldier. Thereto he added, as he gave frequent proof, a remarkable faculty of organisation and administration, as well as a marvellous aptitude for the leadership of men. With these intellectual and moral gifts he was, withal, mystic and fighter—a threefold combination very rare.

I knew him as 'Chinese Gordon,' because the days of my chief knowledge of him were those in which he had come back with all the glory and glamour attached to the hero who—in a sense with his own hand—had put down the Taiping rebellion. Wonderful stories of him were rife. When the Chinese troops under his command would not look up over their entrenchments to fire at the foe, he seized first one and then another by the pigtail, dragging them forth one by one and making them fire over his shoulder, from behind the cover of his own body. So, at length, he inspired them with courage to attack. When the Emperor gave him a medal, he broke it into little pieces, partly

fearing lest it should be an occasion of pride to him, partly that he might give the gold pieces away in charity. He, always a poor man, refused the gift of a very large sum of money which the Emperor would have pressed on him in return for his services.

When I write of him as my friend, I mean, of course, that he was my hero; and I should have been a very poor kind of boy if I had not been the hero-worshipper. He wrote a great number of letters to my mother. Just now, when the war has quickened spirits to a finer consciousness of the nearness of this world and the next—Gordon would rather say to the interpenetration of the two—it seemed to me that a good many might like to read, and might read with profit, the great soldier's views, told in his own simple, yet fervently glowing words, on the subject that lay nearest to his heart—the subject that actually was his very spiritual life-blood. If I may be forgiven a pedantic word, he was the most 'theocentric' man I ever knew. There was none, with him, of that false shame which so ridiculously prevents most of us from speaking of our God. Of his reason for doing this, or for not doing that, he would say, quite simply, 'God would wish it,' or 'God would not wish it.' It is a reason which any one of us might confess to himself, intimately, but it is a reason which we are shy—more's the pity!—of admitting even to a friend. Far less would we state it to 'the man in the street.' But Gordon would; and in his absolute simplicity he could not see why he should not. I suppose that if we could imagine an educated Russian peasant, of the type that Mr. Stephen Graham draws for us, we should have something of a Gordon-like attitude towards religion.

For six years after his return from China Gordon held the post of Commander of the Engineer Forces at Gravesend, with the special office of superintending and setting in order the fortifications of the Thames. It is from Fort House, Gravesend, that most of these letters were written.

Some of the extracts are in rather a melancholy key which does not suggest quite a true view of Gordon's outlook. He was more cheerful than perhaps he gives himself credit for. But then he looked forward to such a glory of bliss in the life to come that it threw all episodes of this life into shadow. And there was, besides, a special reason why these particular letters should not strike a joyous note. Most of them were written to my mother when she was suffering a painful illness, and, with his sympathetic

mind full of his reader as he wrote, it is natural that the rather sad virtue of resignation should take much prominence.

Thus, in December 1870, I find him writing :

' I feel you must often desire the wings of a dove to fly away and be at rest from the windy storm and tempest, and well you may wish it, but we must patiently wait. Our Lord was pained till His bloody baptism was accomplished. The archers wound me sorely at times, and the infirmities of the flesh make me desire death, that I may be dissolved and at rest. Life is no light penance, and yet we so often cling to it ! Thank God, He does not expect us always to be happy in it. We have our hours of Gethsemane into which no human being can enter ; and, though we see it not, it must be good for us, or His infinite love and wisdom would not inflict it. We learn our nothingness in those hours of depression, and I would I never forgot my nothingness. Your soul feels the oppression of the flesh, its deadness and weakness, and thus you enter into the sorrows of our Lord when on this earth amid unsympathetic hearts. Oh Death, thou hast no sting. Oh Grave, thou shalt have no victory : thou wilt liberate me from a dungeon, from corruption, from a sepulchre out of whose depths I cry to be delivered. But we must wait for the third day, the dawn of a new creation, for our deliverance. I would I could comfort, but He will do so, for His love is past understanding. You are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, and He feels for you and is ever by you and will do for you more than even I could desire.'

A like note is struck in an earlier letter of the same year—both the simple counsel to resignation, and the insistence on the aid to the practice of that virtue which he conceives that we may find in the reflection that even our Lord did not achieve it easily.

' There is not one of us who does not feel cast down at times, and if we did not we should be more than mortal. Our Lord said how straitened or pained He was to accomplish and get over His course on this earth, and so must it be with His members. We may not exactly wish to leave this earth so ardently, but we all long to be rid of our trials and depressions and failings.'

There follows in the same letter a story which illustrates strikingly Gordon's view of the duty of our submission to God's will even in our prayers. It suggests the interesting possibility of God's giving us the boon we ask, even though it were better both for us and others that it were not granted. It is a possibility in which Gordon himself manifestly believed implicitly :

'Some six weeks ago a ragged boy' (all his leisure was occupied at this time in trying to rescue poor boys from miserable conditions) 'came to me and told a dismal tale—no father or mother, &c., &c. I clothed him and looked after him and got at length from him where he came from. I wrote to the clergyman of the parish and found the lad had told me many falsehoods, and that he had a father and mother and sisters. After some little persuasion I got him to own this and I took him back to Peckham, only to run away again to this place, where I still have looked after him, though he is what may be called a very bad lad, for he robbed his parents as he left. To-night I had an answer to a letter that I wrote to his old Sunday School teacher, saying that he, when an infant, had been very ill, and his mother had frantically prayed that *if God would only let him live she did not care what came after*. And the child recovered. The mother soon saw her sin of rebellion, and when two of her other children were afterwards taken ill she was quite submissive. Now, I do not question the eternal state of the lad, but I think this very wonderful case shows how subject should we be to God's will in our prayers.'

The letter shows, at all events, a rather wonderful faith, on the part of its writer, in what we might almost call a 'compelling efficacy' in prayer—almost as if the mother had persuaded God against His will and judgment to grant her the life of her child. It is very curious and interesting.

A letter of February of the following year, 1871, again imparts the hard counsel of resignation, and is further interesting in showing Gordon's deep concern in the pains and griefs, not only of his friends, but of all suffering humanity.

'What sorrows there are in the world,' he writes. 'The future must be most transcendently bright to render such discipline necessary. I do feel most acutely the troubles of others, and my life is of so little value to me that if, in His wisdom, He would take it for the relief of others I would so cheerfully give it. But then comes the thought: surely with God there is infinite love and wisdom; it can never be that, so corrupt as I am, I can suppose my love and sympathy equal His; and yet He wills that others should suffer so much. There is a great mystery in His ways, and who can find them out? I suppose it must be that He will so much more make up for all suffering as to make us rejoice, when it is over, that we have gone through it. He repudiates the suggestion most forcibly that His ways are not equal, and so we must live and wait till His time is come to make all things known. I do not look on death as anything but joy, and that, intense joy; but long and continued

bodily suffering is appalling. To die is only a moment's agony, but a long weary life subdues us. The sacrifice of a life is nothing, but the sacrifice of a life's duration is that which we withdraw from. I therefore live for the day, and rejoice at night that it is over. I have no heart for the dinners of society, though I do a good deal in visiting my brother officers and their families. I fear I am gloomy in my thoughts, though I wish not to be so in my demeanour. I cannot help picturing to myself the worries and troubles of the world and wishing He would come and make all things new. I never question in the remotest degree the glorious future that God has prepared for all men, or any of those doctrines you kindly listened to. The world cannot judge us, for the immortal part of all men is not of this world, but has a heavenly lineage. Let us accept ourselves as in a corrupt, evil body, strangely united to us, but not of us, which is dying day by day. We are entombed, the hidden ones and prisoners of the Lord, to learn certain truths which we could not learn otherwise. How happy these thoughts make one. I could not express how deeply I believe, by God's grace, in His universal salvation of the souls of all men. It gives the confidence which can speak peace in the midst of the most untoward circumstances, and never have I felt a doubt of the ultimate glory of my hearers, whatever they may have said to me. You will try and realise this view, and it will much cheer you. Day by day death will be familiar to you as the kindest of friends to you and to all others. The thousands who fall in battle are thousands liberated from prison to see the effulgent God of Love, whom you love and adore with more than your heart can express, and whom you desire to be more worthy of.'

There is much in the above letter which is very appropriate to this present time of stress. Such glowing faith might give comfort indeed, and make man indubitable 'captain of his soul,' no matter what fate might threaten or befall. There are not many who might dare to write thus, of their earnest and cheerful expectation of death, for fear of a suspicion of pretence or affectation, but Gordon had, even at that relatively early moment of his very remarkable career, already given such conspicuous proofs of his absolute indifference to personal danger that he could write so, in perfect simplicity and without the least risk of raising the smile of incredulity.

Mystic though he was, I do not know that he ever believed himself, in his waking hours, visited by any who had passed the veil before him, or that he held communication with them. Of his most intimate friend and namesake, Sir William Gordon, who died long before him, he writes, in these letters, that he had often

seen him in a dream, and that his face conveyed the impression of his peace and happiness ; but that is an experience which most of us, probably, have known. Certainly it is not in the least uncommon. On the other hand, Gordon had a belief which is less usual—that by the means of a dying person you might send a message to a friend who had gone before into the Great Beyond, and even, he did not fear to think and to say, to God Himself in His high Heaven. Thus, under date May 23, 1870, he writes :

' There have been many taken away of late here, and several more are dying. I like to be with them. It brings the future nearer to me, as if you were seeing friends off by a train to a place to which you will eventually go yourself ; and I think you may send messages to those who have already gone, and to the Chief among ten thousand.'

Again, in another letter :

' I fear I have left off writing very suddenly, the fact being an increased sick list among my friends here who require daily visits, as their stay in this port is but short. What a comfort it is to feel that they are going to peaceful homes, that you can, as it were, give them before their departure a message to deliver to our Lord —though it is not necessary, as He is with us and in us.'

I do not know what the books were to which he refers in the following extract, but it is for the expression of his own views that it is worth quotation :

' I have started the books ' (by train, he means, no doubt). ' I do not think they are perfect, but they treat more or less of the mystical interpretations of the Scripture, which are so delightful and full of peace. They also show forth the union of Christ and His members—the keystone of our Redemption.

' Man is apt to rest on the Redemption apart from the liberty which that Redemption gives. God did not redeem us to be feeble and weak, but He redeemed us for His service, to joy in Him, to know Him in His thick darkness. It is the glory of God to hide Himself, and it is our joy to seek Him in all His mysterious movings. The Holy Spirit, which lives in you, will guide you, and give you more and more peace. Seek much to know the mysterious feeling that the God who spun out the worlds is an inmate of your feeble erring body, that He lives there in a distinctly perceptible way known only to those to whom He reveals Himself. H—— knows what I mean. Ask him if he has a little joy which no man could enter into, which he hugs as he hugs no other thing on this earth

and which tells him in his hours of trial that he is the inhabitant of another world and that this is not his home. Ask him and yourself if fear would enter into your hearts if the Sun of Righteousness was to break, some still early morning, into your room. Far better, oh far better to die than to live ; but be strong ; God gives us a work to do, viz., to know Him in all His workings. Be still and rest. Fret not yourself to be anything, but keep your heart fixed on that one truth—Oh God, let me realise your personal presence in me. I cannot tell you what it is : it is a mystery that no tongue can express. And now good-bye. Pardon my passionate writing, which, however, is short of what I feel. I yearn for my dear friends to know my Saviour's value as He has shown Himself to me.'

It is passionate pleading indeed. And we shall do well to remember, as we read, what kind of man the pleader was. He was skilled, and of high repute, in the technique of his profession as a Royal Engineer. I know nothing of that technique, but I am sure we cannot err in presuming it to consist largely in mathematics and in applied science and mechanics. You know what character of intellect any training of that description is apt to produce—exact, dry, unimaginative. It is a man of this training, of an intellect working with exceptional acuteness and lucidity in mathematical and mechanical details, that we have writing thus. I propose to give but one further quotation, valuable in showing us his view of the great mystery of the Atonement, from these letters, for I believe that in a very general way the extensive field of Gordon's religious belief will then be fairly covered. The most remarkable feature of it all is, I think, his intense faith in the personal indwelling of God's spirit in the human soul. It is the quality of faith commonly ascribed to the mystic ; and to the mystic we commonly ascribe, as a usual condition of his creed, the contemplative life. Here and there, very exceptionally, in history we find such faith in the soul of the man (or woman) of action. And therewith, in their union, we have the hero-saint.

Of this high company was Gordon—by virtue of heroism and saintliness united, an inspired leader of men. He could bend men to his will, and make them follow him, as very few have been able to influence and guide them. But again, as just said, he had, to complete an extraordinary personality, the quality of penetrating scientific intellect. That trinity of rare and precious gifts made him a man perhaps unique in human story. I, at least, am at a loss, turning its pages, to find one just like him—his equal in gifts so various and so rich.

The following and final extract shows his absolute conviction of the literal and verbal truth of some portions of Scripture which the more liberal modern view permits the Christian to regard as allegorical or legendary. He was writing, we should remember, at a date when the Church had not yet struck its inevitable compromise with evolutionary science.

'I came back here' (that is to Gravesend) 'into much earthly suffering and sorrow, but it is all working in love, and I do not mourn over the departures from the world. . . . Do you know the secret of God's living in you? I feel that that truth weighs in you, and trust you may realise its power. It is only thus we can feel or understand the Atonement—viz., the Head suffering for the body, Christ dying for the Church. There is a man being prosecuted for heresy for saying it is against conscience to believe God would accept the guiltless for the guilty—and so it is, our Lord must be legally and completely one with those He redeemed. As we were undoubtedly, you and I, once in the dim past ages in one body, Adam our father, and as one with that body were guilty of all that body's acts—and that without being asked whether we willed it or not—so are we one with the new Adam, Christ, by no merit of our own. By the first Adam we inherit guilt, sin and corruption, of which our evil actions are only the fruits; so in the second Adam we inherit glory, holiness and incorruption. In Adam all must die; in Christ all shall be made alive. We who are now on the earth must have been all in the Ark, in the bodies of Noah or his children, even as this year's fruit is now in the trees which will in due time bring them forth. In God's sight all things are present. He sees the end from the beginning. Have you noticed the words "the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world"? ¹ Redemption was no afterthought of God. The Lamb was looked on, before the world was made, as slain, and God never looks on us as lost. A man is religious or God-fearing as God may give that fear. Often, oh often, is the reproach (made?) of want of faith or trust. How can man trust or have faith unless God gives it? And He gives it in measures different to each of us according to our position as members of the mystical body of Christ. The hand, foot, eyes and all differ in the human body, and so it is in the mystical body of Christ. As He is, so are His members—no schism in this, but perfect unity. As you cherish your body, so Christ cherishes His. Can the head exist without the body, or the body without the head? So, mutually, in God's will is the need of us for Christ and the need of Christ for us. He yearns over us, and in our measure we yearn for Him.'

¹ Rev. xiii. 8.

'BEATING BACK FROM GERMANY.'

RECORDED BY LEWIS R. FREEMAN.

I WAS born on a Wisconsin farm, almost within sight of Lake Michigan and only a few miles from the Illinois State line. My father was Irish and my mother German. Like my name, most of my qualities—both good and bad—were those of my father rather than my mother. He died when I was ten, and within a year my mother married our German hired-man. My mother was never unkind to me, but my stepfather was a brute, and from the day of his coming to live with us I date a steadily growing dislike for his race, which has been made worse by a sort of fatality which, in spite of myself, has seemed to work to throw me amongst them all my life.

My stepfather was always rough with me, but until I was sixteen confined himself to a black-snake and horsewhip in beating me. I got on as best I could with him, but when he celebrated my coming to what he called 'man's estate' by starting in on me with a hoe-handle, it was more than I could stand. The second time he tried it I was ready for him and caught him a blow behind the ear with an iron monkey-wrench that laid him out across the chopping-block. Afraid that I had killed him—he was really not hurt much—I ran away, taking nothing with me but the wrench I had in my hand. I never parted with that good old monkey-wrench during all my wanderings of the next ten years, and I felt worse about losing it to the Germans in Flanders than I did about the two fingers their shrapnel bashed off.

For the next few years I did all kinds of farm work, always being employed by Germans because nearly all of the farms in southern Wisconsin are owned by those people. Possibly there were many good people amongst them, but it always seemed to be my luck to get with the others. Hard workers themselves, they were also hard drivers of those who worked for them, and full of mean little tricks for getting more time out of you or for giving you less money. Of course, being quick-tempered and with a sort of standing grudge against all 'square-heads' growing up inside of me anyhow, I was in hot water most of the time. The week that went by without a fight was very exceptional. If they were content to go after me

with their fists, I usually kept to the same weapons, and hardly recall a time when I didn't have the best of it. But if they ever tried anything else I always fell back on my trusty monkey-wrench, which I generally carried swung to my belt with a raw-hide. After a while, just as the Indians used to tally their scalps on the handles of their tomahawks, I started cutting a notch on the wooden grip of my monkey-wrench for every time I had dropped—I don't think I ever killed one—a 'square-head' with it. At first—proud of what they stood for—I cut them broad and long, but soon I saw I was using up my limited space too fast, and, to provide for 'future developments,' began cutting them smaller. It was surprising how much the notches improved the grip.

By the time I was twenty I was able to run both the engine and the separator of a threshing-machine outfit, and started going west every summer to the Dakotas and Montana to get the benefit of the high harvest pay. My winters I spent in a big factory in Racine, learning to repair and build threshers and tractors. Partly to save the money that I would have had to pay for a ticket, but more for the lark of it, I started beating my way back and forth between the east and the west on the trains. Sometimes I stowed away with a week's food in an empty furniture car, sometimes I rode the 'blind baggage,' but mostly it was the old stand-by of the 'bindle-stiff' called 'riding the rods.' My nerve was good and my arms strong, and it wasn't long before I could swing up and disappear inside the 'bumpers' of a train doing thirty miles an hour as easily as the conductor swung on to the tail of the caboose by his hand-rail. It was little idea I had that the tricks I learned in those days were going to make all the difference between my starving in a German prison camp and (what is happening now) being fed on chocolates and pink teas in London by way of training for another go at the Huns.

In 1913 I went to South America to set up and run threshing outfits that had been sold to the ranchers by the Racine company I had been working for winters. I had a two years' contract, and was supposed to go to Uruguay or the Argentine. If I had done that, probably things would have been all right. But at the last moment, as a result of some one else dropping out, I was sent to Rio Grande do Sul, in the southern 'pan-handle' of Brazil. But don't believe that because it was Brazil there were any Brazilians there, or leastways any that counted for anything. The Germans have been swarming into Rio Grande and Santa Catharina for

thirty years, and to-day southern Brazil is as 'Dutch' as—southern Wisconsin. Probably, in fact, it is more so, for there are over half a million Germans there, and hardly a third that many Brazilians.

I had been avoiding German farms for the last two or three years, but in Rio Grande all the ranchers were Germans, and I had to go wherever an outfit had been sold anyhow. The notches multiplied pretty fast on my old monkey-wrench for about three weeks, but at the end of that time I found myself in jail for knocking out the front teeth of a fat German farmer after I had ducked a prod from his pitchfork. Our agent at Santa Catharina and the American Consul at Santos got me clear, but the former took the occasion to cancel my contract and ship me home before, as he put it, I had ruined the company's trade in that neck of Brazil.

I was breaking prairie with a big gasoline tractor outfit in northern Manitoba when the European War started, and so sure I was that my country was going to take some kind of a stand against the invasion of Belgium that I got ready at once to go home and enlist in case we had to back up the protest with force. I waited, with my grip packed, until it was plain that there was no chance of any move from our brave statesmen at Washington—it must have been three or four weeks before I gave up hope—and then threw up my job, did sixty miles on horseback in nine hours to the railway station, and went to the nearest recruiting office. They would probably have taken me as an American, but I was taking no chances on being rejected. I told them I was an Irish-Canadian, and the next day was being put through the paces by the drill-sergeant. I could have got much more pay and a better billet generally by going into the transport service and driving a motor truck, but I had suddenly become aware that I had been nursing a sort of slumbering desire to kill Germans for the last decade, and I wasn't going to miss the chance to let that desire wake up. I sewed an extra loop on my belt so that I could have my good old monkey-wrench always handy, and began looking anxiously forward to the time when I should be able to complete my 'register' of bashed-up Dutchmen on the handle. I might have to use my rifle for long-range work, I told myself, but for the close-in action in the trenches I was going to do with my wrench what the other fellows did with their bayonets. Lucky it was for my peace of mind in those days that I couldn't look forward and see what the end of the next eight or ten months had in pickle for me.

The call was pretty persistent for men in those first months of the war and, in spite of the shortage of all kinds of equipment, our training was rushed from the very beginning. Most of the boys in my regiment had seen service or had training—some had been in the South African War, and others had been members of the English Territorials or the Canadian Militia—already, and we made much better progress than the rawer contingents that came later. We had about three months in Canada, a little longer in England (where I had a touch of typhoid on Salisbury Plain), and by the early spring of 1915 we were in reserve in Flanders. By the time the Germans made their second attempt to drive through Ypres to Calais we had been pushed up into the first line. Until the big attack came, however, we had had no real fighting. The Germans—I had begun to call them Huns by this time instead of Dutchmen—made scattering raids on our trenches and we made scattering raids on theirs, but I never figured in any of this to the extent of mixing in hand-to-hand work. I had no chances to add any notches to the handle of my old monkey-wrench, but from my always carrying it around with me the English 'Tommies' (who call a wrench a spanner) had dubbed me 'Spanner Mike.' They pretended to believe I was a little 'cracked' about my trusty old friend, but I found that they were never above borrowing it for everything, from opening boxes from home to tinkering the gear of broken-down automobile trucks—'motor lorries,' they call them. It's really remarkable what a lot of things a man can use a monkey-wrench for if only he happens to have it handy when he needs it.

For some days the shell-fire against us had been getting heavier—at least they called it heavy then; it would be nothing now—and we knew that the Huns were getting ready for some kind of an attack. What kind it was going to be we little dreamed, for even our officers seem to have known nothing about the gas they had been experimenting with over in Germany. When it came—it rolled toward us in heavy clouds like the morning mists in the Dakota 'Bad Lands'—the word went round that the Huns' munitions had got afire, and we were telling each other that we ought to be sent across to take advantage of the confusion. It was only when we began to notice that it was bubbling up at fairly regular intervals—thick greasy yellow clouds of it—that it seemed they might be putting up a game on us, and by that time one of the advanced tongues of the stuff lapped over into our trench.

I shall never forget the horrible agony and surprise in the eyes of the men who got that first dose. It was the look of a dog being suddenly beaten for something it hadn't done. They looked at each other with questioning eyes—I only recall hearing one man start cursing—then they began gulping and coughing, and then fell down with their faces in their hands. All the time the shrapnel was popping overhead and raining bullets about, and, just as the gas began to pour over my parapet, a bullet knocked my rifle out of my hand, and I slipped in the mud as I jumped back and went down in a heap. It must have been all of six weeks before I stood on my feet again.

My first sensation was of a smarting way up inside of my nose. This quickly extended to my throat, and then, as my lungs suddenly seemed filled with red-hot needles, I was seized with a spasm of coughing. Coughing up red-hot needles is not exactly a pleasant operation, and the pain was intense. Mercifully, it was only a few minutes before a sort of stupor seemed to come on, but even as I passed into half-consciousness I was aware of my outraged lungs revolting, in heaves that shook my frame, against the poison that had swamped the trench. With some of my comrades the fighting instinct was the last thing that died, and I have a sort of a recollection of two or three of them clutching at the parapet and firing from cough-shaken shoulders off into the depths of the rolling yellow gas clouds. One lad toppled over beside me and still kept pumping shots from the bottom of the trench. I remember hazily trying to kick his rifle out of his hand as he discharged it over my ear, and, failing to locate it with my foot, recall groping instinctively for my old wrench and trying to disarm him with that. My last recollection of this stage of things was the shock of feeling the wrench-handle swing backward harmlessly for lack of my two shrapnel-smashed fingers to steady it.

I had rolled and writhed, in the agony of the pain of the gas in my lungs, in a pool of slush in the bottom of the trench, and it must have been the lying with my face buried in the shoulder of my wet woollen tunic that saved my life. Most of my comrades were quite unconscious when the Huns, with their heads protected by baggy 'snoots,' came pouring into the trench, but I had enough of my senses left unparalysed to be able to watch them in a hazy sort of way. The horrible quietness of the thing was positively uncanny. Always before the enemy had charged with yells (it is directed in their manual that they do so, though, of course, a man

'gives tongue' naturally on such occasions from sheer excitement), but now they were hardly making a sound. Probably this was by orders, so that no more air than was necessary should be taken into the lungs, but even when some of them did try to speak the words were so muffled that it must have been very hard to make them out.

The Huns were pretty excited at first, and started right down the trench bayoneting one body after another. But before they got to me an officer stopped them for a minute and evidently gave them to understand that they were to confine their butchery only to those that tried to resist. Two or three of our boys, who had not gone under entirely but had not sense enough to understand the uselessness of putting up a fight, made a few groggy passes at the Huns and paid the penalty. I lay quiet and played 'possum,' but got a nasty prod in the groin when one of them turned me over with his bayonet to see where I was wounded. There was still a good deal of gas in the bottom of the trench, and between that and loss of blood I must have lost consciousness entirely about this time.

My recollections covering the next day or two are very dim and confused, but one thing was photographed so clearly on my mind that the image of it has never faded; I even grow hot as I think of it now, over a year later. This was the last thing I saw before I 'went to sleep' in the trenches—two Huns using my monkey-wrench (the tool I had been 'strafing' 'Dutchmen' with for the last ten years, and which I had brought along to continue that good work with) to tinker up one of our own smashed machine-guns to use against our own men. I never saw it again, and its loss rankled in my mind during the whole year that I was doomed to spend in German hospitals and prison camps.

I have some memory of being carried in a stretcher, and of passing through one or two dressing-stations where my wounds were washed and bandaged. My connected recollections begin after my waking up in a hospital—well back from the Front, but still not out of the sound of the guns—that was evidently devoted entirely to 'gas' cases. The ward I was in was filled with men from my own regiment, but what interested me specially—as soon as I was able to take any interest in anything beyond my own suffering—was to observe that a great many Germans were also being treated in the same hospital. I never did find out just how these happened to be 'gassed,' but presume it was either through accidents to their apparatus or from their 'snoots' being faulty.

At any rate, the Germans had evidently prepared in advance for 'gas' cases, and the chances are that they pulled through a good many of us who might have died had we been taken back to our own hospitals, where they had, at that time, small facilities for handling that kind of trouble. The ward was kept as hot as a Turkish bath, and some of our chaps thought this was done with the idea of making our agony worse. One of them, who jumped out of bed, threw up a window, got a lungful of cold air, and died the same night, gave us a proper object-lesson in why the air had to be kept at close to blood heat. Some of them also thought that a kind of stuff they gave us to inhale made us worse rather than better, but that was only their imagination. If there was any real ground for complaint it might have been on the score that the doctors tried a good many experiments on us because this was the first chance they had had to study gas poisoning on a large scale, but that was no more than we could have expected. Probably our own doctors would have been glad of some 'dogs,' in the shape of Huns, to 'try it on' when they first began to study 'gassing.'

But the doctors were always attentive, and the nurses always kind—more than kind, most of them. But I already had learned that a nurse's best stock-in-trade is her 'sympathy,' and those I met in Germany were no exception to the rule. I think it was the way that those plump blonde *fräuleins* looked after us poor devils in that steaming-hot ward that kept me from trying to run amuck and commit murder as soon as I was well enough to be sure that my memory of those two Huns tinkering at our machine-gun with my old monkey-wrench was no 'fevered vision.'

I have been told often since returning to England that it will be just as well not to say too much about my hardships in the German prison camps, as it might be the way of making things all the worse for those still doomed to remain there. So I shall touch lightly on this side of my experiences, and, to be on the safe side, will try not to mention any camps or other German localities by name. I was sent to what, had I but known it, was the most liberally run prison camp in Germany after my discharge from the hospital, but even at that the treatment was so abominable in comparison with what I had been receiving and had a right to expect that it undid at once the 'soothing' effect the kind nurses and doctors had had on me. I don't mean that I went back physically a great deal—my constitution was too strong for that—but only that my old hate of the Hun redoubled. This would have

been all very well if I had only been back in the trenches, but in a prison camp it could only have one end. I dropped in his tracks with my fist—mighty hard it was his shaved head felt to my half-healed 'right'—the first guard that tried to hustle me into line with the toe of his boot. Then I used up what strength I had left in a rough-and-tumble with three or four others, until one of them finally put me to sleep with the butt of his rifle. In at least three other camps I could name I would have been shot then and there (it has happened to many a lad whose pride made him turn loose on a brutal guard), and I can count myself very lucky that I got off with no more than a bit more of a beating up and two weeks' solitary confinement on black bread and water. Perhaps the worst consequence of my action was my transfer, a few weeks later, to a camp that has since become notorious for both its unhealthfulness and its inhumanity.

The first glimmerings of sense (regarding the situation that I was going to have to face as a prisoner of war in Germany) was let into my rather thick head by the blow it got from that rifle butt ; the rest—enough to start me on the right course, at least—filtered in during my two weeks of solitary confinement on bread and water. I was of no use to myself or anyone else in a German prison camp, I told myself. I had no chance there either to kill Huns or destroy Hun property. Once outside I might well be able to do both—perhaps even get back to England and join my regiment if any of it was left. How to get out ?—that was the question. From that time on I turned my every thought and act to that one end.

What makes it almost hopeless for a prisoner of war to get out of Germany is not so much the actual escape from his prison—that is comparatively easy, especially if he is on outside work—as the lack of clothes and money, and the difficulty of avoiding giving himself away by being unable to speak the language. These things make the odds a thousand to one against the average prisoner having more than twenty-four hours' freedom at the outside. The chances against success are so big that few attempt it. Luckily, I had one advantage over the general run of the prisoners in my ability to speak fairly good German. I must have had a lot of accent, of course, but I still understood all that was said to me in German, and was also able to say all that I wanted to. This would be good enough, I told myself, to run a bluff with the ordinary run of people I might meet about my being a returned German-American come back to work for my Fatherland ; that is

to say, I ought to be able to prevent such people from being suspicious of me, where they would have attacked or reported a man who could not speak German at once. Anything in the way of police or officials I should have to fight shy of, and, as I knew there must be all kinds of checks on strangers and travellers, I knew I should have to steer clear of trains and hotels. I felt sure of myself on the score of language, therefore; clothes and money were things to be provided as opportunity offered. Fortunately, Fate was very kind to me in this respect.

One little incident I must mention before I go on with my story. In the prison I was transferred to, most of the English prisoners, after a while, began to receive parcels from home, even some of the Canadians coming in on the deal. I, having no friends either in Canada or England, got nothing direct, but all sorts of nice little odds and ends of dainties came my way in the final 'divvy.' One lad from the south of England, who was dying with a sort of slow blood-poisoning and lack of care of a never-healed wound at the back of his neck, was especially generous to me with the things he got from home, and when he finally went under I managed to get permission to write a few words to his family, telling them, among other things, how kind he had been to me with his parcels. And what should they do—his broken-hearted mother and sisters in Devonshire—but 'adopt' me in his place and keep right on sending the chocolate and cigarettes and other 'goodies' just as regularly as before. And now they've been to see me here, and tell me they are going to keep sending me things when I return to the Front just the same as though I was the boy they had lost.

As soon as I had fully made up my mind what I wanted to do, I went on my good behaviour, got into the 'trusty' class, and was one of the first picked for outside work when the call came for English prisoners to help in harvesting and road-making. I had a good chance to practise my German during the harvest work, but the prospects for making good after a 'get-away' were not very promising, and I had sense enough to bide my time. But when I got switched on to road work, and when almost the first thing I saw was a bunch of Huns clustered round an old Holt 'Caterpillar' tractor that had got stalled on them, I felt that time was drawing near.

Now a 'Caterpillar' is just about the finest tractor in the world for general purposes, provided it is run by a man that has had

plenty of experience with its funny little ways; in the hands of anyone else—even a first-class engineer that is quite at home with a wheel tractor—it is the original fount of trouble. To me the machine was an old friend, however, for I had run one for two or three seasons in the West and worked for a winter in one of the company's factories in Illinois. I took the first opportunity to let the Huns know my qualifications, and when they saw me start in to true up the wobbly 'track,' they just about fell on my neck then and there. They had seized the machine in a Belgian sugar-beet field a few days after the outbreak of the war, they explained, and it had been used for a while to haul heavy artillery in the drive into France. After a time the hard usage had begun to tell on the 'track,' and—as they had no new parts to replace worn ones with—it had been giving about as much trouble as it was worth ever since. When I told them that it was adjustment rather than replacement that was needed, and that in a few days I could have the machine as good as new, they fairly tumbled over themselves to 'borrow' me for the job.

As a matter of fact, the old 'crawler' was just about on its last legs, but I knew in any case that I could tinker it into some kind of running shape, and the comparative freedom of the job was what I wanted. This worked out even better than I expected, for after the first day or two, in order to save the time taken up by returning me to the prison camp at night and bringing me back in the morning, they arranged for me to bunk in in the road camp. They were too much occupied in hustling the job along to think about asking me for my parole—a lucky thing, for I should have had a hard time to keep from breaking it.

With two men to help me, I took the tractor all down, 'bab-bitted' up the bearings, readjusted the gears, and had it up and running at the end of a week. With a string back to the seat to open up the throttle for the sharp pulls, I had it snaking a string of ten waggon-loads of crushed rock where it had been stalling down on three before the overhauling. During that week I had also managed to pick up—no matter how—several marks in money, and had succeeded in concealing so effectually the greasy jacket of one of my assistants that he gave up hunting for it and got a new one. A machinist's cap had already been given me, and the evening that the other helper washed out his overalls and flung them over his tent to dry, I—seeing a chance to complete my wardrobe—decided promptly that the time had come to make

a move. They had offered me a steady job running the old ‘Caterpillar,’ and at something better than ordinary ‘prisoner’s pay,’ but as it would have kept me in the same neighbourhood, I could not figure how it would help my chances in the least to ‘linger on.’

There was supposed to be a sentry watching the road machinery, and also keeping a wary eye on the tent where I bunked with a half-dozen of the engineers, but he did not take his job very seriously, and I knew I would have no difficulty avoiding him. We had had a hard day of it, and my tent mates were in bed by dark—about 8 o’clock—and asleep, by their deep breathing, a few minutes later. They all slept in their working clothes, else I could have made up my outfit then and there. But it did not matter, for within half a minute of the time I had slipped noiselessly under the loosened tent-flap, I was making off down the road with a full suit of German machinist’s togs under my arm. Five minutes later I stopped in the darker darkness under a tree by the roadside and slipped them on over my prison suit, rightly anticipating that the extra warmth of the latter might be very welcome if I had much sleeping out to do.

It was partly in bravado, probably, and partly because I felt that, if missed, I would be searched for in the opposite direction, that caused me to head for the two-mile-distant town of X—. And it was probably the same combination which led me, after passing unchallenged down the long main street, to march up to the wicket of a ‘movie’ show, pay my twenty-five pfennig and pass inside. Had there been a ‘hue and cry’ that night (which there was not), this was undoubtedly the last place they would have looked for me in.

The films were mostly war views—cracking fine things from both the Russian and French fronts—and other patriotic subjects, but among them was one of those ‘blood-and-thunder thrillers’ from California. I don’t recall exactly how the story went, but the thing that set me thinking was the way the heroine pinched the lights off the automobile they had kidnapped her in, and afterwards pawned them for enough to get a ticket home with. What was to prevent my going back and getting busy on my old ‘Caterpillar,’ I asked myself. The magneto was worth something like a hundred dollars, and even if I had no chance to sell it, it was a pity to overlook so easy a bit of ‘strafing.’ I concluded that my steps had been guided to that ‘movie’ show by my lucky star, and promptly got up and started back for the road-making

camp. On the way some tipsy villagers passed me singing the 'Hymn of Hate,' the air and most of the words of which I had already picked up, and, out of sheer happiness at being again (if only for a few hours) at liberty, I joined in the explosive bursts of the chorus, booming out louder than any of them on 'England.' Evidently, unconsciously, I had done quite the proper thing, for they raised their voices to match mine, gave a 'Hoch' or two, and passed on without stopping. That also gave me an idea. During the whole following two weeks of my wanderings in Germany every man, woman or child that I passed upon the road, in light or in darkness, might have heard me humming 'The Hymn of Hate,' 'Die Wacht am Rhein,' or, after I had mastered it toward the end, 'Deutschland über Alles.'

It was plain that my flight had not been discovered, for I found the camp as quiet as when I left it three hours before. I could just make out the figure of the sentry pacing along down the line of tractors and dump-waggons, but the canvas which had been thrown over the 'Caterpillar' to protect it from possible rain made it easy for me to escape attracting his attention. Of light I had no need; I knew the old '65' well enough to work on it in my sleep. A wrench and pair of nippers, located just where I had left them in their loops in the cover of the tool-box over the right 'track,' were all I needed. First I cut the insulated copper wires running to the magneto with the nippers, and then (placing my double-folded handkerchief over them to prevent noise) unscrewed with the wrench the nuts from the bolts which held the costly electrical contrivance to the steel frame of the tractor. Then I cut off with a knife a good-sized square of the canvas paulin that covered the machine, wrapped the magneto in it, and tied up the bundle with a piece of the insulated copper wire, leaving a doubled loop for a handle. Then I threw out some of the more delicate adjustments, dropped some odds and ends of small tools and bits of metal down among the gears where they would do the most 'good,' pocketed the knife and nippers, and, with the magneto in one hand and the biggest wrench I could find in the other, set off for X— again. The wrench was my last and greatest inspiration; it was to take the place of the one the Huns had robbed me of in the trenches. I am glad to be able to write that I have it by me at the present moment, and that it is slated to go back to the Front with me—I hope to do a bit of the 'strafing' that Fate denied the other.

Probably no prisoner of war was ever loose in the interior of Germany with a clearer idea of what he wanted to do, and how he intended to do it, than I had at this moment. I knew that my only chance of escaping capture within the next twenty-four hours was in putting a long way—a hundred miles or more—between myself and that place by daylight, when the 'alarm' would go out. I knew the only way this could be done was by train; but I also knew that the quickest way to instant arrest was to try to enter a station and take a train in the ordinary way. To any but one who had 'hoboed' back and forth across the North American Continent as I had the game would have seemed a hopeless one.

I was far from despairing, however; in fact, I never felt more equal to a situation in my life. The whole thing hinged on my getting my first train. After that I felt I could manage. I had studied German passenger cars as closely as possible in watching them pass at a distance, and was certain they offered fairly good 'tourist' accommodation on the 'bumpers' or brake-beams; but I did not feel that I yet knew enough of their under-slung 'architecture' to board them when on the move. This meant that I was going to have to start on my 'maiden' trip from a station or siding, where I could find a train at rest. A siding would, of course, have been vastly preferable, but as I had none definitely located, and knew that I might easily waste the rest of the night looking for one, the X—*bahnhof* was the only alternative. Because this was so plainly the *only* way, I was nerved to the job far better than if I had had to decide between two or three lines of action.

Nor was I in any doubt as to how the thing would have to be done. At the ticket windows, or at the gates to the train shed, I was positive I would be challenged at once—even if no word had yet gone to the police of my escape—and held for investigation. Besides, I had not money enough to take me a quarter the distance I felt that I should have to go to be reasonably safe. The only way was to follow the tracks in through the yards and make the best of any opportunity that offered. The ten or twelve-pound magneto would be a good deal of a nuisance, but, as the possible sale of it at some distant point offered an easy way to the money I was sure to need, I decided not to let it go till I had to.

I already knew the general lay of the X—station, and decided that it would be best to go to the tracks by crossing a field just

outside of the town. My road crossed the line a half-mile further away, but I felt sure a bridge over a canal which would have to be passed if I took to the ties at this point would be guarded by soldiers. A stumble through a weed-choked ditch, a trudge across a couple of hundred yards of rye stubble, a climb over the wire fencing of the right-of-way, and I was once more crushing stone ballasting under my brogans, as I had done so often before. Ten minutes later I passed unchallenged under the lights of a switching-tower and was inside the X— yards. Almost at the same moment a bright headlight flashed out down the line ahead, and before I reached the station a long passenger train had pulled in and stopped. 'Just in time,' I muttered to myself; 'that's my train, wherever it's going.'

Entering the train-shed, I avoided the platforms and hurried along between the passenger train and a string of freight cars standing on the next track. Two or three yard hands brushed by me without a glance, for there was practically no difference between my greasy machinist's rig-out and their own. But as I stopped and began to peer under one of the *erstige* coaches I saw, with the tail of my eye, a brakeman of the freight train pause in his clamber up the end of one of the cars and crane his head suspiciously in my direction. Scores of times before (though never with so much at stake) I had faced the same kind of emergency, and, without an instant's hesitation and as though it was the most natural thing in the world to be doing, I started tapping one of the wheels with my big steel wrench. Heaven only knows if they test for cracked car wheels that way in Germany! I certainly have never seen them do it, at any rate. Anyhow, it served my purpose of making the brakeman think I was there on business, for he climbed on up on to his train and passed out of sight. Two seconds later I was snuggled up on the 'bumpers,' with my wrench and magneto in my lap.

The brake-beams of a German *schlafwagen* are not quite as roomy as those of an American Pullman, but they might be much worse. The train was a fairly fast one, making few stops, and I believe would have taken me right in to Berlin if I had remained aboard long enough. I was getting rather cramped and stiff after four or five hours, however, and not caring to run the risk of being seen riding by daylight, I dropped off as the train slowed down at a junction on the outskirts of what appeared, and turned out, to be a large manufacturing city. The magneto slipped out of my

two-fingered hand as I jumped off, and brought up in the frog of a switch with a jolt that must have played hob with its delicate insides, but I wasn't doing any worrying on that score. Here I was, safe and sound, a good hundred miles beyond any place they would ever think of looking for me. Moreover, I had money in my pocket, as well as the possible means of getting more. I couldn't have wished for a better start.

There are a number of reasons why it would not be best for me to go into detail at this time regarding the various ways in which I steered clear of trouble in getting beyond the German frontiers, not the least of them being that it might make it harder in the future for some other poor devil trying to do the same thing. I do not think, however, there would be one chance in a thousand for a British prisoner less 'heeled for the game'—a man unable to speak the language and to steal rides on the 'brake-beams' of the trains, I mean—than I was to win through from any great distance from the frontier. But however that may be, I am not going to make it harder for any one who may get the chance by telling just how I did it.

Money—to be obtained by selling the magneto of the tractor I had brought along with me—was the first thing for me to see to after getting well clear of the country in which I was likely to be searched for, and it was in going after this that I was nearest to 'coming a cropper.' I made the mistake—in my haste to get rid of the burden of the heavy thing—of offering it to the first electrical supply shop I came to. The proprietor wanted the thing very badly, but while he seemed to accept readily enough my story that I was a returned German-American working in munition factories, he said that the law required him to call up the police and ask if anything of the kind had been reported as stolen. I was not in the least afraid that the magneto would be reported at a point so distant from the one I had taken it from, but I did know that I couldn't 'stand up' for two minutes in any kind of interview with the police. So I told old Fritz to go ahead and telephone, and as soon as his back was turned grabbed up the magneto and slipped out to the street as quietly as possible.

Whether the police made any effort to trace me or not I never knew. There was no evidence of it, anyhow. I headed into the first side street, and from that into another, and then kept going until I came to a dirty little secondhand shop, with a Jew name over the door. Luckily the old Sheeny had had some dealing in

junk and hardware, and knew at once the value of the goods I had to offer. As a matter of fact, indeed, the magneto was a 'Bosch,' made in Germany in the first place, and imported to the U.S. by the makers of the tractor from which I had taken it. I was a good deal winded from quick walking—I hadn't a lot of strength at that time anyhow—and the shrewd old Hebrew must have felt sure that I had stolen the thing within the hour. He said no word about 'phoning the police, however, but merely looked at me slyly out of the corner of one eye and offered me fifty marks for an instrument that was worth four or five hundred in ordinary times, and probably half again as much more through war demands. I could probably have got more out of him, but I was in no temper for bargaining, and the quick way in which I snapped up his offer must have confirmed any suspicions the old fox may have had concerning the way I came by the 'goods.' The joint was probably little more than a 'fence'—a 'thieves' clearing-house—anyhow, and I was dead lucky to stumble on to it as I did.

I had two hearty meals that day in cheap restaurants—taking care to order no bread or anything else I felt there might be a chance of my needing a 'card' for—and that night swung up on to the 'rods' of a passenger train that had slowed down to something like ten miles an hour at a crossing, and rode for several hours in a direction which I correctly figured to be that of the Dutch frontier. I spent the following day moving freely about a good-sized manufacturing city, and the next night 'beat' through to a town on the border of Holland. As this was not a place where there were any factories, my machinist's rig-out didn't 'merge into the landscape' in quite the same way it did in the places where there was a lot of manufacturing, and I stayed there only long enough to make sure that the frontier was guarded in a way that would make the chances very much against my getting across without some kind of help. Such help I knew that I could get in Belgium, and therefore, as the whole of the German railway system seemed to be at my disposal for night excursions, I decided to try my luck from that direction. I wanted to take a look at Essen and Krupps while I was so near, but finally concluded it would not be best to take a chance in a district where there were sure to be more on the watch than anywhere else. The distant tops of tall chimneys and a cloud of smoke in the sky were all that I saw of the 'place where the war was made.'

The Germans boast of a great intelligence system, yet not once

—so far as I could see—was I under suspicion during the several days in which I made my leisurely way, by more or less indirect route, into Belgium. As a matter of fact, I did not give them very much to 'lay hold of.' I kept closely to my original plan of steering clear of railway stations and hotels, and of asking for nothing in shops or restaurants that might require 'tickets.' The weather was good, and most of my sleeping was done in about the same quiet sort of outdoor nooks as the American 'hobo' seeks out in making his way across the continent. The only difference was that it was safer, if anything, in Germany, and many times when, in the States, I would have been greeted by a policeman's club on the soles of my boots, I saw, from the tail of my eye, the 'arm of the law' strut by without a second glance at the tired machinist, with his wrench beside him, dozing under a tree in a park or by the roadside. I had half a dozen good meals with kind-hearted peasants, and one night—it was raining and I was pretty played out—I accepted the offer of a bed in a farmhouse, the owner of which had a son who had a sheep ranch in Montana, near Miles City, a place where I had run a threshing outfit one season. He said he was very sorry that the boy had not been as clever as I was in evading the 'Englanders' and getting home to help the Fatherland. He was a kind old fellow, and I tinkered up his mowing-machine and put a new valve in his leaking pump to square my account. There were a number of little incidents of this kind, and the simple kindness of the old peasants I met—mostly fathers and mothers and wives with sons or husbands in the war—was responsible for the fact that I did not feel quite as harshly against Huns in general when I left their country as when I entered it. Still, I know very well that their good treatment of me was only because they thought I was one of themselves, and that they would probably have given me up to a mob to tear to pieces if they had suspected for a minute what I really was.

I went through into Belgium on the brake-beams of a fast freight which, from the way it seemed to have the right-of-way over passengers, I concluded was carrying munitions urgently needed at the Front. It was slowed down in some kind of a traffic jam at a junction when I boarded it, but when I left it—when I thought I was as far into Belgium as I wanted to go—it was hitting up a lively thirty miles an hour or more, and all my practice at the game could not save me from a nasty roll. Luckily, I dropped clear of the ties, and as the fill was of soft earth, with a ditch full

of water at the bottom, I was not much the worse for a fall that would have brained me a dozen times over on most American lines.

Of how I got out of Belgium into Holland, and finally on to England, it would not do for me to write anything at all at this time, beyond saying that it was entirely due to aid that I had from the Belgians themselves. One of the most interesting chapters of the war will be the one—not to be published till all is over—telling how Belgian patriots in Belgium not only kept touch with each other during the German occupation, but also contrived to send news—and even go and come themselves—to the outer world. Even the 'electric fence' along the Holland boundary has no terrors for them, and I am giving away no secret when I say that there are more ways of getting safely under or over that fence than there are wires in it. It will probably do no harm for me to say that *I* crossed this barrier on a very cleverly made little folding stairway which, when not in use, was kept hidden under a square of sod but a few feet away from the fence itself. The genial old German sentry who spread it for me—he had, of course, been liberally bribed, and probably had some regular 'working arrangement' with my Belgian friends—confided to me at parting that, when he had accumulated enough money to keep him comfortably the rest of his life in Holland, he intended to climb over that little stairway himself and never go back. I have often wondered how many other Germans feel the same about leaving 'the sinking ship.'

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